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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

# Russian literature in transition, 1927-1928

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Russian Literature in transition, 1927-1928," submitted by Betty Jean Busch in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Date 6 December 1978

To my husband, Robert,

I dedicate this thesis.

ABSTRACT

The first three decades of the twentieth century witnessed the effervescense of modernist currents. Reacting against what was perceived to be the dead hand of the nineteenth-century realist-naturalist tradition, avant-garde groups flourished in post-war Europe. A plethora of ephemeral little magazines sprung up to carry the word of the new prophets to the people. One of the foremost of these periodicals was Eugene Jolas' transition. An English-language journal published by Americans in Paris, transition sought to bridge the cultural gap between Europe and the United States by introducing to its readership experimentalist European writers in English translation. While concentrating on English, French and German writers, transition included translations of writers from seventeen different countries. Russian literature was one of the areas promoted for a time, and this study examines the Russian works selected by transition.

The first chapter briefly surveys the international English-language literary magazines in Europe, especially in Paris, and discusses transition's place within this context. Attention is then directed to reasons for the inclusion of Russian literature in transition. Chapter two examines the philosophy of Eugene Jolas, transition's originator and chief editor, and reviews his relationships with the principal avant-garde movements of the period under study. The third chapter is devoted to a detailed consideration of the Russian

works published in transition, with special attention to the quality of the translations. Chapter four assesses the representativeness of the Russian works selected for transition and devotes considerable attention to the characteristics which Russian literature of the time shared with other modern movements. The omission of the Russian futurists and the possible explanations for this receive particular scrutiny. The final chapter examines the extent to which the inclusion of Russian literature in transition contributed to the editor's overall objective.

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# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION: TRANSITION, ITS CONTEXT, AND RUSSIAN LITERATURE

### transition: A Brief History

transition was an American literary journal published in Paris between the years 1927 and 1938. Dougald McMillan, the author of a history of transition, subtitles his work "The History of a Literary Era, 1927-1938."[1] This subtitle cogently conveys transition's importance in literary annals. While for many, the journal came to represent the "lost generation" with all its decadent excesses, the cognoscenti in both Europe and America recognized that transition's claim to a lasting position in the history of the 1920s and 1930s was based on something far more substantial. In this introductory chapter we will examine why this was so.

Although transition's success was dependent on the efforts of a host of individuals, it was the brain child of Eugene Jolas. Born in the United States in 1894 of a Lorraine French father and a Rhenish German mother, Jolas was taken to his father's native village of Forbach when he was two years old. He returned to the United States in 1910 and worked at a number of newspaper positions before returning to Europe in 1921. Seeking an outlet by which he could bridge the gap between America and Europe by bringing together neoteric writers from both continents, Jolas began preparations for the first issue of transition in the fall of 1926. With the help of his wife Maria and Elliot Paul (his replacement as editor of the literary

page of the Paris Chicago Tribune) Jolas launched his journal from the dining-room table of his Paris apartment. From the beginning, he was concerned with providing a forum for experimental writers who might otherwise not have had the opportunity to appear in print:

> Transition wishes to offer American writers an opportunity to express themselves freely, to experiment, if they are so minded, and to avail themselves of a ready, alert and critical audience. To the writers of all other countries, Transition extends an invitation to appear, side by side, in a language Americans can read and understand.[2]

Elliot Paul remained with transition as associate editor until the summer of 1928. At that time Paul became a contributing editor, and his position as associate editor was assumed by Robert Sage, another Paris Chicago Tribune staff member. Sage continued in this position until late 1929 when his transfer to London necessitated his resignation.

With the thirteenth issue in the summer of 1928, transition ceased to be a monthly publication. While Elliot Paul had been able to devote all his attention to the journal, Robert Sage had continued with his newspaper career, and thus the bulk of the work devolved upon Jolas. Consequently, publication was only possible on a quarterly basis. In this same issue transition adopted the subtitle "An International Quarterly for Creative Experiment." This subtitle is somewhat at odds with a statement in the March 1928 (No. 12) issue announcing that the emphasis in the future would be on American contributions,[3] although it would continue to publish translations of important European works, and still considered itself a link between Europe and America. transition's policy changed once again with issue No. 16-17 (June 1929), where the focus was no longer on America, but rather on

the need for a general revolution in literature. In this issue was published the famous manifesto known as "The Revolution of the Word Proclamation."[4] Signed by Jolas and fifteen others (one of whom was really Jolas under the pseudonym Theo Rutra), the proclamation had twelve points, interspersed with quotations from Blake. This manifesto will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 4. With this issue, the whole tone of the journal changed. In an essay entitled "Logos," Jolas elucidated his linguistic credo:

> The photographic conception of the word can no longer interest us. We desire a nomenclature that evokes an immediacy and the essence of an abstraction. The état-limite of the spirit cannot be expressed through the words and arrangement of words which, by dint of having been used and abused, no longer evoke in us the primary image. . . .We demand the etymology of approximation and apperception.[5]

As an example of what was meant by "approximation and apperception," one can cite a portion of his "Faula and Flona" which began: "The lilygushes ring and ting the bilbels in the ivilley. Lilools sart slingslongdang into the clish of sun . . ."[6] In addition to the proclamation, a "Revolution of the Word" section was initiated which was to continue through No. 19-20.

The June 1930 (No. 19-20) issue was anticipated to be the last one. A weighty consideration was the fact that James Joyce, whose serialized "Work in Progress" had been a significant adjunct to the periodical, was having great difficulty with his eyesight, which had so deteriorated that he no longer felt he could honour his commitment to transition. Additionally, Robert Sage had been transferred to London, and the journal was losing money. The continuing deficit from each issue was burdening Jolas' family finances.[7] transition was dormant until March 1932, when it was resuscitated with help from the Servire

Press. The twenty-first issue appeared with a new subtitle: "An International Workshop for Orphic Creation," reflecting Jolas' emphasis on poetry. With the February 1933 (No. 22) issue, Jolas embarked on a policy of tri-lingual publication:

> The crisis of language is now going on in every part of the Occident. It seems, therefore, essential to retain the linguistic creative material intact, and to present constructive work, as much as possible, in the original.[8]

The languages involved were, understandably, those in which Jolas was conversant: English, French and German.

The twenty-fourth issue (June 1936) was published in the United States. The reasons why Jolas left Europe are myriad, but, according to McMillan:

> The rise of fascism in Europe was distasteful to him. America, despite all its manifest faults catalogued in transition, still held a mythical fascination for him. He decided to try once again to realize his dream of taking part in the development of America which seemed to him, younger, more hopeful, and more alterable than Europe.[9]

The Servire Press went bankrupt after this issue, but Jolas and his newest associate editor, James Johnson Sweeney, managed to publish two more issues in New York. In a final statement, Jolas summarized what, in his view, transition had accomplished:

> . . . it became an independent workshop for the development of a new style and a new language through a continuous effort to expand the frontiers of expression. It was the first modern review published in Europe or America to recognize the "malady of language." . . . This linguistic revolution was already in the air when Transition began. But Transition organized for the first time, in Europe and America, and brought into focus, the efforts being made in that direction by writers in English, French and German.[10]

The twenty-seventh and last issue was published in Paris in the winter of 1938 amidst the rising hysteria of the insanity sweeping Europe. It was perhaps a fitting gesture that the Nazis burned a copy of

transition in Munich during a rally against "decadent" literature.[11]

## transition's Environment: International English-Language Journals in Paris

transition was not alone in attempting to publish experimental literature. The first three decades of the twentieth century saw the birth and demise of a plethora of so-called "little magazines." In Frederick J. Hoffman's 1946 work on little magazines, it is mentioned that since 1912 there had been over six hundred little magazines published in English alone.[12] Bernard J. Poli, in his monograph on the Transatlantic Review, distinguishes between the literary magazines and the little magazines. He stresses that the literary magazines reflect the tastes of those who buy it, whereas the "little magazines" try to promote new ideas rather than sales:

> They contain what their sponsors think is good or true, with the avowed purpose of winning readers over to their views, and with the firm belief that they have a right to tell the public what to admire.[13]

In the next section we will discuss transition's place within the context of other little magazines being published at the time. However, here it would be fitting to investigate why English-language journals were being published in Europe, and especially Paris, during the first three decades of this century.

The most obvious and mundane reason is that Europe was a relatively inexpensive place to be after World War I. The devaluation of European currencies offered Americans a highly favorable rate of exchange for their dollars. Frederick J. Hoffman, in his work on American writers in the twenties, points out that in 1925, for example,

the dollar was bringing in from sixteen to twenty-two francs.[14] While this rate of exchange was less favorable than some other European currencies, it still made Paris a much less expensive place to live than, say, New York's Greenwich Village. As an example of what this might mean to the publisher of a shoe-string journal, Ernest Earnest mentions that five hundred copies of transition could be printed in Vienna for the equivalent of $25.00.[15] In addition, and aside from the question of the dollar's value, the living expenses in general were lower in Europe than they were in the big cities of the United States. This meant that not only could the publishers afford to publish more readily, but also the struggling writers (on whom the publishers were so dependent) could afford to live in Europe.

Another reason why some writers came to Europe was that, in a sense, it was the "in" thing to do. Many writers had been ambulance or camion drivers for the French during World War I and stayed on in Europe after the war. Writing about their experiences, they attracted still others to the "bohemian" life in the Paris garrets. During the uncertain era after the war it was not only cheap, but also popular to become an expatriate, albeit temporarily.

The most crucial reason, however, why journals went abroad is related to the stifling literary atmosphere existent in the United States at this time. By and large, those who set up new journals abroad were rebelling against the staid literary standards of what Poli would term the "literary magazines." To be sure, one cannot say that all of the literary magazines were run by those who were unimaginative and conservative. Nevertheless, for the most part, editors of the more "established" journals were reluctant to offend their readership by

printing anything untoward. The poet Hart Crane, in a letter to his friend, Allen Tate, derides this stuffiness:

> What strange people these----are [Ridgely Torrence and Marianne Moore, editors]. Always in a flutter for fear bowels will be mentioned, forever carrying on a tradition that both Poe & Whitman spent half their lives railing against--and calling themselves "liberals."[16]

and

> Phallus-es have been known to slyly leap out of some of Mr. Gilmore's poems published in The Little Review, so---- had better watch out. But she probably doesn't know one when she does encounter it![17]

The little magazines, on the other hand, did not balk at the indecorous. For example, Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap, editors of The Little Review, were fined $100 and had their magazine suppressed for printing installments of Ulysses (they were found guilty of printing obscenity). Harriet Weaver's magazine, The Egoist, had called forth similar charges in England.[18]

It was not only the narrowmindedness of the editors of literary magazines, however, which caused the new journals to flee the United States. In line with their basic conservatism was a reluctance to recognize any but established authors as worthy of being printed. A case in point is cited by Earnest. When the editor of Outlook asked Richard Aldington in 1919 to write an article about young writers, Aldington cited Joyce, Eliot, Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, H.D. and Proust. The editor's response was ". . . can't you think of somebody who has been heard of or is even likely to be heard of?"[19]

Frequently, both the editors and writers in Paris were escaping the blatant puritanism so characteristic of America after the war. Whereas prohibition and conformity were touted in the United States, the general atmosphere in Paris was one of toleration. And with regard

to artists, not only did Americans find tolerance, but in addition the French often exhibited a positive respect. Writers were treated as professionals, taken seriously, even given special treatment in some cases.

Finally, although there was probably no overwhelming reason why Paris was chosen over other cities (and in fact, other journals set up shop in places like Rome and Berlin), Paris was seen as having a certain tradition of culture which writers and artists found highly appealing. Paris had served as a magnet for painters during the second half of the nineteenth century when the presence of the symbolists there enhanced the city's general reputation as a place where the arts were appreciated.

## transition Within the Context of Other Similarly-Oriented Journals of the Time

The roster of little magazines which were published in Europe during the period under consideration is quite lengthy. While their emphases varied, they had many traits in common. "Little magazines," comments Poli,

> contain the ideas and the literature of tomorrow, along with many bizarre or abortive attempts to "make it new" at all costs. Unfortunately, trying too hard to be original can quickly become tedious and repetitious, so that they are bound to die of lack of funds, lack of a coherent policy, or lack of original ideas, and sometimes of all three.[20]

This statement, or variations on it, could account for the rise and demise of nearly all the English-language journals publishing in Europe at this time. Usually their lives were short: Broom, edited by Harold A. Loeb, was published in Rome, Berlin and New York from 1921 to 1924; Secession, edited by Gorham Munson and Matthew Josephson, in Vienna,

Berlin, Reutte and Brooklyn, 1922 to 1924; Transatlantic Review, edited by Ford Madox Ford, in Paris, 1924 to 1925; This Quarter, edited by Ernest Walsh and Ethel Moorhead, in Paris, Milan and Monte Carlo, 1925 to 1927; The Exile, edited by Ezra Pound, in Dijon, 1927 to 1928; and the New Review, edited by Samuel Putnam and Peter Neagoe, in Paris, 1931 to 1932. This listing is not by any means exhaustive and is only meant to give an indication of the various companions transition had, although none was really attempting to do the same thing at the same time.

In examining the context in which transition published, two other important journals of the time, both predecessors of transition, should be commented on. Ford Madox Ford's Transatlantic Review, along with Ernest Walsh's This Quarter, are generally regarded as the most significant of the exile magazines (transition excepted) during the twenties. Ford's journal, while concentrating on his own works and those of Conrad, also promoted William Carlos Williams and Ezra Pound. It did print some more experimentalist authors such as Gertrude Stein, James Joyce and E.E. Cummings. Walsh's This Quarter seemed destined to fill the gap left by Transatlantic Review's demise. The work published in This Quarter was, on the whole, more experimentalist than that of Transatlantic Review. New, younger writers were encouraged and welcomed. But Walsh and Ethel Moorhead quarrelled, perhaps over Kay Boyle,[21] and the magazine barely managed to continue after Walsh's death in October 1926.

transition thus began its life following in a particular tradition of expatriate, experimentalist little magazines. At the time transition was inaugurated, it was the only journal of its kind in Paris.

According to Samuel Putnam, transition

> . . . has a unique place in the literary history of the period. . . In popularizing the work of Joyce and Stein, which previously had been known chiefly to the select few, it performed an invaluable service.[22]

Here it should be stressed that because transition was the largest of the little magazines and because its lifespan was relatively long, its influence was consequently greater than its smaller, more ephemeral antecedents.

What, exactly, were transition's accomplishments? If one examines its output over the eleven-year period of its existence, one can note the following: transition published much of James Joyce's Finnegans Wake under the title "Work in Progress;" many works by Gertrude Stein; parts of André Breton's L'Amour fou and Nadja; many examples of the works of the dadaists, expressionists and surrealists. It published parts of Hart Crane's The Bridge, some of the early poems and stories of Dylan Thomas, and presented Franz Kafka to English readers for the first time. It should be noted that some of these authors, notably Gertrude Stein and James Joyce, had had difficulty in getting their works published by other English editors. Thus, in a real sense, transition was responsible for providing an appropriate forum for gifted but "difficult" writers, and may be said to have been responsible for introducing significant but heretofore nearly unnoticed writers to the American literary public.

Of course, in operating on such a grand scale, there were many times when transition's selection did not adhere to standards of so-called literary "taste" and even exhibited bad judgement. Malcolm Cowley indicates one of the problems:

> . . . types were represented, with good writing of most types and bad writing of all. Angry, sophisticated, high-spirited, tired, primitive, expressionist, objective, subjective, incoherent, flat, it included everything that seemed new.[23]

In fact, in their introduction to the first number of transition, the editors announced what their standards would be:

> No rigid artistic formulae will be applied in selecting the contents of TRANSITION. If the inspiration is genuine, the conception clear and the result artistically organized, in the judgement of the editors, a contribution will be accepted. Originality will be its best recommendation.[24]

Thus, the editors made clear that originality would be the first criterion, and, in fact, they adhered to this policy throughout the life of the journal.

That this policy was to lead to excesses was perhaps inevitable.[25] It is unfortunate that many authors, writing of their experiences during the twenties, remember mainly transition's sensational aspects and few of its accomplishments. As an example of the kind of reputation transition had acquired by the end of the twenties, Ford refers to Edward Titus' snide remark when reviving This Quarter, which was to be devoted to the encouragement of modern young American and English writers in Paris:

> That it would in no way condescend to compete with Jolas' transition he made clear in a statement worded to tweak the "revolutionists of the Word." "I wish to emphasize that the English in this magazine will be understood. There will be no attempt to re-create the English language."[26]

Robert McAlmon, another Montparnasse habitué and sometime publisher, teased his friend Kay Boyle about her connection with Jolas and his magazine. According to Ford, he asked her how she could possibly spend hours with the transition editors talking about "the reevaluation of the spirit in its intercontinental relations."[27] In a stunning example of

convoluted logic, Wyndham Lewis attacked transition in his review The Enemy for having a "neo-romantic, Nietzschean will-to-power" and at the same time he equated transition with the communists via its relation with the surrealists. He concluded that transition was "part of a communist conspiracy."[28] Even William Troy, whose comments on transition were generally laudatory, remarked that ". . . for the greater number of readers transition reads like an almost totally inscrutable scroll."[29]

In view of transition's very real and demonstrable accomplishments, its place in the annals of literary history of the twenties and thirties is assured. Despite all its flaws, it nonetheless made a substantial contribution to furthering an understanding of avant-garde movements in Europe for its English-speaking readership.

## The Place of Russian Literature in transition

In investigating the Russian literature appearing in transition during the 1920s, one must view it within the framework of editorial policy. Eugene Jolas and Elliot Paul showed quite clearly an interest in foreign literature in an editorial introduction to the first number:

> It is quite natural that the new interest in American literature should stimulate a curiosity about the literature of other lands. Languages are badly taught, in the United States, and geographic isolation makes it still more difficult to follow contemporaneous European literature.[30]

Thus the editors were concerned from the very beginning with making available foreign literature in English translation to keep their readers cognizant of new trends beyond the boundaries of the United States.

While transition's first objective was obviously to publish American literature and to encourage fledgling and experimental writers, it is clear that the inclusion of analogous non-American literature was also a very important aim. In the December 1927 issue (No. 9), a list of authors and artists from seventeen countries is presented with a note that many of these have been presented by transition in English translation for the first time. The editors were very conscious of their role in initiating their readers to the newest and what they considered the best in foreign literature, in some cases before these works had been widely recognized even in the home countries of the writers. A statement in No. 10 would seem to confirm this: "transition does not wait for the approbation of the majority to introduce living forces in the arts."[31] This statement is followed by a listing of foreign writers who had appeared in the first ten issues. One can see from this prominent display that a purposeful effort was being made to acquaint the readership with authors on a near-global scale. Russian literature, then, was not unique but it did enjoy a relatively prominent place in the context of other foreign literatures being published during the first eighteen months in transition.

The periodical was not limited to literature. It included as well artists and other cultural representatives. While this was true for Russia[32] and other foreign countries, this study will not take up other areas of the arts, but will concentrate on imaginative literature.

There were a number of reasons for including Russian literature in transition, aside from the editorial policy. Of particular significance was the emergence, after the October 1917 Russian Revolution, of an almost mystical belief that Russia and the United States represented

the crucial life forces of the future. This belief is reflected in another editorial statement by Jolas and Paul in their review of the first year's achievements: "We admit that America, together with Russia, has most definitely the soil where a new civilization may possibly flower to a synthesis of the forces that have left Europe. . ."[33] While perceiving the tremendous energy set forth by the Revolution as potentially positive, there was concern expressed, nonetheless, that Russia was prepared to destroy its heritage and replace it with something that ultimately might not be art. The United States, on the other hand, was seen as being in danger of becoming mechanistic. In a reply to transition's "Inquiry Among European Writers into the Spirit of America," the Soviet writer Vladimir Lidin responded that:

> America is accelerating the progress of European civilization. . . But . . . I fear that in the feverish accumulation of positive experience American civilization is menaced by the drying up of the vessels and arteries of her spiritual life.[34]

Cowley comments:

> Russia was like America: they were two formidable giants marching against the old European culture to which writers clung, and Europe was weakening before their onslaught.[35]

Further to this point is an essay by Elliot Paul, "The New Nihilism,"[36] in which he states that English literature, especially American literature, had been pervaded by the influence of the Russians before World War I. He saw this literature as having been influenced by Dostoevsky, in particular, and as being noted for its humanistic elements which, according to his thesis, the war had rendered meaningless. Paul was concerned that the scope of the new nihilism in literature surpassed that of the Russian nihilism expressed by Bazarov's rejection of humanistic values in Turgenev's Fathers and Sons.

According to McMillan, Jolas' attitude toward the Soviet Union was one of hope as well as distrust. "The spirit of the Russian revolution was attractive because it was 'aimed at the destruction of a thoroughly rotten structure, just as were the American and French revolutions.' But the developments in Russia did not seem to fulfill the promise."[37]

Russian literature was apparently widely available at this time. Until 1928 when the Soviet Union's New Economic Policy (NEP) was replaced by the first Five-Year-Plan, many Soviet authors had relative freedom to travel to both Europe and the United States. In addition, there was a colony of emigré Russians in Paris who could provide the linguistic expertise needed to translate Russian works. Most crucial, perhaps, was the presence of Russian publishing houses in Europe. For a time in the 1920s many Russian publishers had branches in Europe, particularly in Berlin. For example, in 1923, although the number of Russian enterprises in Paris had dropped to one, there were over fifty in Berlin.[38]

Information on translational aspects of transition is not readily available. McMillan tells us that there were not sufficient funds at hand for translators and that almost all of this work was done by Jolas and Paul. Jolas is acknowledged as a translator of only one of the Russian works, and that was in collaboration with Gusta Zimbalist. Since Jolas is only known to be tri-lingual (English, French and German), it might be assumed that Ms. Zimbalist translated the Russian into French or German, and that Jolas then translated the work into English; or that Ms. Zimbalist prepared the first draft of the English translation and Jolas did the final draft. McMillan mentions only one Russian translator in his work, Sophia Himmel, "A young Russian woman . . . who lived in

Paris had maintained contact with Russian literature and was able to suggest and translate for transition . . ."[39]

Russian literature was published in transition for a relatively short period, from No. 2 in May 1927 through No. 14 in the fall of 1928. It did not, however, appear in every consecutive issue. There was no Russian literature in numbers 7, 11, 12 and 13. Explanations for the cessation of Russian translations can only be conjectured; however, there are two major apparent causes, one internal and the other external.

Of the two original editors, Elliot Paul seems to have been the one most interested in Russian literature. He wrote two articles dealing with this topic ("The New Nihilism," No. 2 and "Simultaneity in Modern Russia," No. 5) and, together with Jolas, referred to it several times in editorial statements. Paul ceased to be associate editor with No. 13 and Russian literature ceased with No. 14. It may have been that Paul was instrumental in presenting Russian literature in transition, and that with his departure, interest in Russian literature evaporated.

The external cause of the demise of Russian literature is straight-forward. The end of 1928 marked the beginning of the first Five-Year-Plan in the Soviet Union. This period was characterized by an extensive, oppressive clampdown on so-called "ideologically alien" artists. Any attempt to have an unauthorized work published in the West could lead to serious consequences for the writer -- e.g., public vilification, criminal charges including treason, and loss of publishing rights at home. Thus, contrary to previous practice, Soviet literature was not available for publication in the West without governmental authorization. Those works which were officially sanctioned tended to stress industrialization and collectivization (Five-Year-Plan themes).[40]

Since Soviet works were to be accessible to the masses, they could not be overly experimental or "subtle." In short, officially authorized Soviet literature would have been unlikely to have interested most Western editors, and certainly not those of transition. Gottfried Benn, in the March 1932 issue, relates information from Sergej Tretjakov describing how the writer as a professional has disappeared in Russia and works like everybody else in a factory, helping with the Five-Year Plan. Tretjakov stresses that psychological literature has been abolished in Russia and that all works must henceforward be realistic, i.e. documentary. He shows with pride samples of the new literature, each written by a dozen factory workers with titles such as Establishment of a Fruit Plantation Near a Factory, and How to Air the Dining Room in a Factory, etc.

Finally, with the publication of No. 22 (February 1933), the editors embarked on a policy of tri-lingual publication, which, in effect, meant a concentration on English, French and German. The expense of a Cyrillic type-face would have been prohibitive for a journal of transition's means. Given the relatively small number of competent Russian readers, there was little likelihood that Russian literature would fit in with this new policy.

## Chapter 2

## EUGENE JOLAS, TRANSITION, AND AVANT-GARDE MOVEMENTS

### Jolas as Editor: His Background and Philosophy

Eugene Jolas, with his bi-cultural experience in Alsace-Lorraine, familiarity with the United States, and mastery of the profession of journalism was singularly suited to his goal of bringing together the best of the experimental writers in both the United States and Europe. McMillan comments that Jolas suffered from "frontier anguish:"

> His attempts in transition to find a stratum of experience and a language deeper than the surface differences of national literatures were in part an attempt to reconcile the cultural conflict which had troubled him from his childhood.[1]

Jolas saw himself as a "man from Babel,"[2] the phrase reflecting the linguistic and cultural chaos of his native Forbach.

As a youth, Jolas was deeply religious, even to the point of attending a seminary in Montigny. Although he never took vows, and later revolted against the church, his early religious training remained with him. It is clear from his later writing in transition that poetry became for him "a means of experiencing a transcendental state which is essentially religious."[3] Coupled with Jolas' religious training was his interest in the mystical, the unconscious, dreams and other forms of psychic experience. According to McMillan, Jolas had at one time felt himself possessed by the devil and had experienced visions.[4]

A further element in Jolas' makeup was his interest in the romanticism of the nineteenth century. As a child in Forbach, Jolas had devoured the works of Novalis, Tieck, Brentano, the Brothers Grimm

and others. He shared with the romantics a quest for transcendental experience and published translations of Novalis, Jean Paul, Hölderlin and others in transition. He was especially interested in Novalis and what he termed "white romanticism." White romanticism was contrasted with black romanticism (which emphasized the darker, cruel and satanic aspects). According to Jolas, Novalis professed a white romanticism which, while not ignoring the darker aspects, sought to combine with the positive forces into a higher unity. Jolas was particularly concerned with Novalis' concept of "magical idealism," which saw so-called unreal mental phenomena as signs of creative imagination, and thus just as authentic as what is normally termed "reality." Jolas specifies those concepts of Novalis' work (in many cases equally true of other romantics) which interested him:

> The "Hymns to the Night" . . . do not sing of the bitter conflict between the finite and the infinite but grow out of a certainty of redemption, a spiritualization of the sensual, in which the real and the transcendental worlds interpenetrate. Preoccupation with the nocturnal was a characteristic of the early romantics, for whom the dream and the daydream, the fairy tale and the fable constituted sources of a future literature. To them poetry and life were identical. This may have been mere Schwärmerei, as the philistines insist, but it was also an attempt to demolish the dualism of spirit and nature. . . [5]

While Jolas' interest in the dream world can be traced to the influence of the romantics, he found a scientific basis in the works of the twentieth-century psychoanalysts for his concept of the dream as a source of art. He was attracted less to Freud's theories than to Jung's because Jung's "contribution to the explanation of the unconscious gave the poet an importance far exceeding that which Freud's theories afforded him."[6] Jolas was to publish several articles relating to dreams and the unconscious, including Jung's "Psychology and Poetry."

Ultimately Jolas' interest in romanticism led him to publish works by the "neo-romantics" of the twentieth century. He comments that pan-romanticism was the single unifying line (if one indeed exists) covering transition's entire activity:

> Many of the writers . . . belonged to that heritage of visionaries . . . Transition contained elements of gothic, romantic, baroque, mystic, expressionist, Dada, surrealist, and finally, verticalist modes of thinking. In the last phase it tried to blend these traditions into a cosmic, four-dimensional consciousness.[7]

At this juncture it would be appropriate to examine briefly the "neo-romantics" of the twentieth century whom Jolas saw as being a part of "that heritage of visionaries"--the dadaists, surrealists and expressionists.

## Jolas and the Expressionists, Dadaists and Surrealists

Jolas' contacts with the expressionists dated from his Strasbourg days where he had met Rene Schickele and Kurt Schwitters. It was through these two writers that Jolas was introduced to other expressionists. While expressionism had never been a highly cohesive movement (indeed, it encompassed the works of such diverse individuals as Georg Kaiser and Franz Kafka), such common concerns as there were had virtually dispersed by the time that Jolas began publishing transition. Thus it is to Jolas' merit that he undertook to acquaint his readership with a movement that had seemingly died before English-language readers were even aware of it.

The expressionists, like transition's other "neo-romantics" stressed the unconscious and the irrational. Of special interest to Jolas was their verbal experimentation. The expressionists were not

concerned with depicting outside reality. Rather, the stress was on the emotional situation of the characters. Freud and the psychoanalytical school in Zurich had helped to foster interest in what Jolas called the "magical operation of the inner world." He believed that

> Such expressionists as Franz Werfel, Georg Trakl, Carl Einstein, and others, presented a frontal attack against naturalistic materialism and made possible a revolution of the soul. They liberated both form and language and reintroduced the metaphysical and the numinous into life and art.[8]

transition's selection of expressionist works encompassed a wide range, both geographically and in terms of the genres chosen. According to McMillan, transition published works by members from almost every German city where expressionism flourished.[9] While the journal concentrated on narrative prose, and could only find room for one of the plays, it also published some poetry. At a time when authors like Gottfried Benn and Franz Kafka were virtually unheard of in the United States, transition endeavored to familiarize its readership with their works. It was Jolas' contacts within the expressionist writing community which enabled him to be aware of and acquire for publication those works which would not otherwise have come so quickly to the English-language sector. For example, it was Jolas' friend Carl Einstein who negotiated with Max Brod for the publication of Kafka's "Das Urteil" as "The Sentence" in transition.[10]

Jolas' relationship with the "neo-romantics" in Paris began when he ran the weekly series, "Rambles Through Literary Paris" in the literary section of the Paris Tribune. In this column he published his interviews with contemporary authors such as André Gide, Philippe Soupault and André Breton. Jolas' fluency in French, his own status as a poet, and his European background helped to provide access to these

authors. His relationship with the surrealists was more than a professional one, for he "often spent the evening drinking and talking with Philippe Soupault or Robert Desnos or walking about the city with Paul Eluard."[11]

According to McMillan, while Jolas presented surrealism and expressionism primarily as movements related to transition but different, Jolas considered his own theories an extension of dada.[12] Jolas met Hans Arp, one of the original dadaists, through good friends in Strasbourg.[13] Arp later introduced him to Tristan Tzara, one of the more bizarre figures in the movement. Dada was born in Zurich at the night-club Café Voltaire, where in 1915 a motley international crew of artists and writers gathered to listen to lectures and display their wares. While usually seen as a nihilistic movement which parodied the activities of the symbolists, opposed rationalism, coherence and established art and literature, dada had another side to it which Jolas found attractive and attempted to bring to the attention of his readership. Dada represented a deep spiritual revolt against the rationalism that had led countries into the chaos of world war. This would naturally have attracted Jolas, with his deep-seated concern with mysticism and the dream world. Moreover, some of the dadaists were experimenting with sound poems, which fit in well with Jolas' interest in renovating language.

That dada was not taken seriously can be seen in these comments from Robert McAlmon:

> I never was romantic about French groups, and I knew many of the Dadaists who enjoyed being Dadaists because Dada is nothing, so they could do nothing and feel fine about it. It was impossible to know them, and to glance at their work, and to come away impressed.[14]

McAlmon's comments were typical and consequently Jolas set himself a nearly impossible assignment in trying to combat the public image of dada and get his readership to take it seriously.

When transition began publishing materials on dada, the movement had already, to a large extent, become fragmented. Many of the dada poets and artists had evolved into surrealists. Thus it is to Jolas' credit that he took on the task of making comprehensible a movement that no longer seemed to have relevance to the contemporary literary scene. Viewing dada from the perspective of 1975, George Steiner shows that Jolas' critical instincts were true:

> . . . it now seems probable that the entire modernist current, right to the present day, to minimalist art and the happening, to the "freak-out" and aleatory music, is a footnote, often mediocre and second-hand, to Dada.[15]

As an indication of why the dadaists can be seen as ancestors of the "freak-out," we will quote from Hugo Ball's article on sound poetry, in which he describes the reading of his famous poem/incantation "gadji beri bimba:"

> I invented a new species of verse: "Verse Without Words," or sound poems, in which the balancing of the vowels is gauged and distributed only according to the value of the initial line. The first of these I recited tonight.
>
> I had had a special costume designed for it. My legs were covered with a cothurnos made of luminous blue cardboard, which reached up to my hips so that I looked like an obelisk. Above that I wore a huge cardboard collar that was scarlet inside and gold outside. This was fastened at the throat in such a manner that I was able to move it like wings by raising and dropping my elbow. In addition I wore a high top hat striped with white and blue.
>
> I recited the following:
>
> gadji beri bimba
> glandridi lauli lonni cadori
> gadjama bim beri glassala
> glandridi glassala tuffm i zimbrabim
> blassa galassasa tuffm i zimbrabim.[16]

Surrealism was an outgrowth of dada which, while still

celebrating disorder, lacked the nihilism so characteristic of dada. According to André Breton, surrealism was

> Pure psychic automatism . . . by which it is intended to express . . . the real process of thought. Thought's dictation, in the absence of all control exercised by the reason and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations.[17]

The surrealists attached great importance to the dream and the unconscious. This frequently took the form of automatic writing (something Jolas disapproved of), similar in some respects to stream-of-consciousness but with the proviso that it be unhindered by rational thought, i.e. writing was to pour from the unconscious and then be left exactly as it was.

By the late twenties, surrealism was the most vital literary movement in France. While transition was not the first English-language magazine to print the surrealists, it nonetheless deserves credit for its effective presentation. Other journals (e.g. The Little Review, Secession, Broom) had published surrealistic writings but in no instance did they present the wide-ranging selection offered by transition (in all, it published over sixty surrealistic pieces). transition's success in this regard, of course, was due to Jolas' personal contacts.[18] This was particularly important because the leader of the surrealist group, André Breton, was at that time usually insistent that members of his group publish only in La Révolution surréaliste.

As with the dadaists, Jolas printed not only surrealistic texts in translation, but also commentary and explanation, following his credo that European literary movements must be made intelligible to transition's English-language readership. transition published, among others, works by André Breton, Paul Eluard, Philippe Soupault and the comte de Lautréamont, whose nineteenth-century Lay of Maldoror (Les Chants de

Maldoror) was seen as one of the antecedents of surrealism. In addition, Jolas published Robert Desnos' "I have Dreamed so Much About You" ("Le dernier poème"), which can now be found on the monument to the deportees at the tip of the Île de la cité in Paris.

Jolas saw these neo-romantic movements as ultimately combining to form what he first termed "verticalism," and then "vertigralism." In transition No. 21 he published his "Poetry is Vertical" manifesto which included statements similar to his "Revolution of the Word" document. It also contained a rejection of the classical ideal of harmony and made several points which added up to a call for a quest in search of poetic experiment. In reviewing transition's achievements, Jolas comments:

> . . . a new literary style resulted . . . a style that broke with the imagistic-objectivistic tradition in order to seek a symbolical form. This style, which derived from expressionist, dada, and surrealist experiments, flowed finally into the cosmological imagination of verticalism. . . [19]

Jolas saw vertigralism as a reaction to the mechanistic mode of thinking and the frenetic intellectualism of the post-war world.[20] It was the "intuitive reaching towards the above," cites Hoffman from Jolas' "Frontier Man," towards the "man who will participate in the collective consciousness of the universe, who will find contact with the . . . world soul."[21]

While dada, surrealism and expressionism were patently the most important and cohesive movements published in transition, one should not overlook the fact that they were just three elements contributing to a largely experimentalist whole. The majority of the writers in transition was not from either France or Germany, but, at least originally, from the United States. Since the focus of this study is

ultimately on the Russian writers included in transition, it is crucial to bear in mind those writers who, as we have seen, exhibited qualities which had an affinity to the philosophical background of the editor. In the next chapter we will examine the Russian writers within this context.

## Chapter 3

## RUSSIAN LITERATURE AND TRANSITION

### The Twentieth-Century Russian Literary Scene: A Brief Survey

The first three decades of the twentieth century in Russian literature saw a flowering of literary groups, most of which, in one form or another, were reacting against the dead hand of the nineteenth-century realist-naturalist tradition. Additionally, as in Europe, many of the new literary groups had strong ties with their counterparts in artistic movements. While there were many literary groups rising and falling during this period, it will suffice for this study if we mention briefly only the most significant. This will indicate the relative position of Russian literature vis-à-vis European literature.

Symbolism was the dominant force in Russian literature from roughly 1890 to 1910. Basically a revolt against realism, Russian symbolism had its origins in the French movement of the same name in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The symbolist writers (who concentrated on verse) were to breathe new life into poetry, which had suffered from the overwhelming attention given to narrative prose forms (especially the novel) in the preceding era. The symbolists were responsible for initiating experimental trends in Russian versification, trends which led to major developments in Russian prosody, e.g. a movement by some poets from syllabo-tonic to purely tonic verse. Its best-known practitioners were Aleksandr Blok, Andrej Bielyj and Valerij Brjusov.

Acmeism was an offshoot of symbolism. Neoclassic in its

attention to logic and simplicity, it stressed the skill and artistry of poetry, as opposed to the mysticism and fantasy of the symbolists. Its leading proponents were Nikolaj Gumilev, Anna Axmatova and Osip Mandel'stam. Using the slogan "Beautiful Clarity" as a motto, the acmeists endeavored to bring poetry back to earth.

Another scion of symbolism was futurism. This movement, which was autonomous in its own right, had some areas in common with Italian futurism. Characterized by their neologistic use of language, discarding of standard syntax, experimental use of rhymes and a breaking of standard grammatical conventions, among other things, the futurists, after October 1917, attempted to become the standard-bearers of the Revolution. While there were many different futurist factions, including ego-futurists, cubo-futurists, 41° and others, the groups were held together loosely by their concern with innovation. Vladimir Majakovskij was the best-known member of these groups, but other important figures were Velimir Xlebnikov and Aleksej Kručenyx.

Sergei Esenin was regarded as the leader of another post-revolutionary movement, imaginism. This poetic movement, based on arresting and daring images as the primary ingredients of verse, shared with futurism a taunting attitude toward bourgeois mentality. A pessimistic movement in the main, the imaginists revelled in Bohemian vulgarity and enjoyed breaking societal taboos. Along with Esenin, Anatolyj Mariengof and Aleksandr Kusikov were well-known imaginist poets of the time.

After the Revolution an effort was made to promote writers of proletarian origin, or at least proletarian "mentality." Two of the organized groups should be mentioned here, the cosmists in Petrograd and

the kuznitsa (or smithy) group in Moscow. The work of these writers was filled more with revolutionary zeal than talent in most cases, and their themes were collectivism, factories and "the people." Deriving from elements of symbolism, futurism and imaginism, these and other proletarian groups produced little of lasting interest.

The "Fellow Travellers," or poputčiki, as Trotsky called them, constituted a large but unorganized force of writers after the Revolution. By no means a literary school, the fellow travellers were those writers who, while basically accepting the Soviet regime, harboured doubts about the ideological implications of communism for art. Thus, the term "fellow travellers" referred not to a literary movement as such, but rather the philosophical outlook of its "members." Indeed, many of the fellow travellers were members of other established literary groups.

The foremost writers among the fellow travellers were the Serapion Brothers. Unlike most of the other recognized literary groups of the time, the Serapions held to no overall literary doctrines except for their belief that the artist must be independent of external (i.e. political) influence. The Serapions, naming themselves after E.T.A. Hoffmann's hermit, came to the fore during the relative artistic freedom of the New Economic Policy period. There were twelve Serapion Brothers,[1] and all were young--the oldest being Konstantin Fedin who was twenty-six in 1921 when the group began. These writers were most important for their contributions to the revival of Russian prose. Their themes tended to reflect the turmoil of the Revolution and its aftermath. The speech of the characters in their stories often seemed to be lifted directly from the countryside, with its regional dialectisms, or from the semi-literate urban masses. Experimentation with narrative devices

was endemic.

From this short survey one can see that there was a great deal of ferment on the Russian literary scene of the early twentieth century. In some instances, there were parallels in Russian literature with what was going on in the rest of Europe. Most importantly, until the end of the twenties, there was a continual effort in Russia to revolutionize the literary language. While for some writers these efforts were aimed more at shocking the middle class, most were seriously attempting to seek out new linguistic forms which would free the standard literary language from what was perceived to be a stultifying past.

## The Russian Works in transition

Twelve separate Russian works, by eleven different writers, were published in transition. Most of these writers were either from the Soviet period or else spanned it, but one, Aleksandr Puškin, belonged to the nineteenth century. Poetry was represented by the works of Aleksandr Puškin, Sergej Esenin and Aleksandr Blok, specifically the second scene of his play, The Unknown Woman. The remaining works were in prose. The writers came from different groups -- imaginist, Serapion Brothers, symbolist, smithy. Most belonged to no special literary school, but were fellow travellers. Many were experimentalist writers to one degree or another. However, much of what made these authors experimentalist was a function of style and language, and was therefore at the mercy of the translator's skill and comprehension. In addition, some of Soviet Russia's truly innovative writers were not represented at all. The one overriding theme which would bind most of the Soviet artists together was a preoccupation with the Revolution and War Communism, and, more

specifically, with their effects on the people.

In discussing the Russian literature appearing in transition, my approach will be to take up the nineteenth-century poet A. Puškin first, then two other poets, A. Blok and S. Esenin, whose works span the pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary periods. I will then turn to the Soviet prose writers.

Aleksandr Puškin (1799-1837), Russia's foremost poet of the nineteenth century and a father of modern, i.e. nationally original, Russian literature, appeared in transition in July 1927 (No. 4). The selection of his "Gabriliad" (1821) seemed somewhat anachronistic. Entitled in Russian "Gavriliada," the poem is a mock epic parodying the Annunciation. It was apparently written as a prank and Puškin never publicly admitted to being its author, although it is said that he secretly acknowledged this to Czar Nicholas in 1828 in order to escape punishment.[2] An extremely blasphemous and quite erotic poem, "Gabriliad" was not published until the Soviet period, and even today is usually found only in editions of Puškin's complete works. The poet's attitude to his subject is light-hearted. He intersperses professions of piety with blatant irreverence. The work is written in freely-rhymed iambic pentameter with a caesura after the fourth syllable.

Translated by a scholar of Russian and Soviet literature, Max Eastman, who omitted the opening twenty lines of the original, the story relates the classic tale of the old carpenter and his young, virginal wife. However, Puskin's point of view of their celibate life is altogether different from the New Testament version:

> The Hidden flower, as though by ancient fate
> To some high other honor designate,
> Upon its little stem did not unfold.

> The languid man with his old sprinkling pot
> Gazed on the flower at times, but sprinkled not.[3]

Meanwhile God, surrounded by his celestial retinue, appears to Mary in a vision, and tells her to prepare to share his glory. As the vision vanishes, Mary, although pleased to have been selected by God, finds herself more attracted to the angel Gabriel. The poet then digresses about the joys of love. In the meantime, God sends Gabriel down to Mary as, in the poet's words, his procurer. While walking in the garden, Mary meets Satan, in the obvious guise of a snake. He speaks to her of Eve's boredom in Eden until he brought the joys of love to Adam and Eve. An erotic passage follows, describing Adam and Eve blissfully in Paradise, and then the snake turns into a handsome youth and seduces Mary. Gabriel appears on the scene to do battle with Satan and wins when he bites the devil in the groin. Gabriel then seduces Mary and returns to God saying that Mary is ready. Finally, God appears in the form of a dove, takes his turn and leaves. This episode concludes with:

> And weary Mary thought: What goings on!
> I think that I may say I've seen a revel,
> To have all on a single summer day
> The Deity, An Angel, and the Devil![4]

Praying to Gabriel for assistance in love, the poet comments that if Gabriel's help is not forthcoming, he - the poet - will pray to the devil.

In examining the translation, it should first be stated that Eastman made no attempt at following Puškin's rhyme scheme or meter. With regard to the translation proper, in general, Eastman, while not providing a literal translation, has managed to capture Puškin's impish spirit. To be sure, there are phrasings which are not completely felicitous, and several cases of downright error. For example, on p. 122, Satan tells Mary that she was born to "strike amazement to the sons of

Adam/To lord it over tender hearts. . . drive them crazy," etc. and ends with "And look at your sad fate!" However, it is clear from the Russian, "Vot žrebij tvoj,"[5] that the final phrase should have been translated "This is your fate," i.e. to strike amazement to the sons of Adam, etc. Another case in point can be found on p. 131. Eastman translates "Iosifa prekrasnyj utešitel'! Molju tebjá. . . "[6] as "O Joseph the Consoler/ To you I shall bend down my prayerful knee!" In fact, the poet is not addressing Joseph, but Gabriel.

There are some instances where the translator has omitted a whole line from the text. For example, on p. 117, following "And in their blue unfathomable deeps," the line "v sijanii i slave nesterpimoj"[7] has been left out. On the other hand, there are occasional additions to the text. The line "Iz pamjati ee ne vyxodil,"[8] is translated "She could not drive them from her drowsing head" on p. 118. While not actual additions, there are words and phrases where the translator is being more picturesque than Puškin, i.e. he translated "ne mnogo on smotrel/ Na prelesti, kotorymi vladel,"[9] as "He little tasted of these charms he owned" (p. 116). More impishly, Eastman translated "Ia ej otkryl,"[10] as "I primed her well" (p. 129), and "I ty pylal,"[11] as "You burned and blabbed about it" (p. 119).

Finally, it is very difficult for Eastman (or any translator, for that matter) to provide adequate translations for some of Puškin's lofty, Church Slavic expressions. For example, on p. 117 Eastman translates "dostojnyj vertograd," as "blameless garden." Aside from the fact that dostojnyj might have been more accurately translated as "worthy," Eastman also could have made more of an effort to "exalt" the word vertograd. After all, if Puškin had wanted to say "garden,"

he would have used the word sad. On the same page Eastman uses a device to heighten the word "eyes." While he is unable to provide a loftier form for očam, he compensates for this by capitalizing the word "Sun-like." This device could perhaps have been used more frequently in dealing with high ecclesiastical or Church Slavic forms.

While this mock epic is not experimental in the modern sense, it does represent a non-conventional treatment of a Biblical theme. Certainly the editors of transition were rather scandalously breaking with tradition in publishing it, and this may have been an inducement for its inclusion. In a sense, it could be said that Puškin was here exhibiting the same tendency to épater le bourgeois found in some of Jolas' neo-romantics. In printing "Gabriliad," transition was making accessible one of Russia's greatest poets to an English-speaking audience which still knew too little about him. While "Gabriliad" was not very representative of Puškin, it could well have served to arouse interest in his writings. It was fitting that a work by a Russian romantic appear in a journal whose editor was so attracted to German romanticism. Additionally, Puškin's irreverent attitude toward fixed linguistic forms (i.e. using lofty words in a "low" context), although not as evident in Eastman's translation as in the original, was in harmony with Jolas' iconoclastic approach to language.

Aleksandr Blok (1880-1921) was the most prominent writer of the symbolist period and the foremost poet in Russia from the beginning of the twentieth century to the end of World War I. During his early period (1898-1903), Blok was known for his mystic vision of Sophia, who represented the feminine principle of Divine Wisdom. In his

writing, Sophia appears in various embodiments: the Mysterious Maiden, Beautiful Lady, Young One, etc. Blok later lost this vision and in a radical about-face turned earthward to the company of gypsies, prostitutes and barflies, all of whom figure in his verse.

In 1906 Blok wrote one of his most famous and haunting poems, "The Unknown Woman," in which he tells of a prostitute who frequents a cafe every night. Seven months later, his play by the same title was finished, and this is the work serialized in transition (No. 2, May 1927; No. 3, June 1927; No. 4, July 1927).[12] In this play, characters seem to melt into each other in typically symbolist fashion, the division between the "real" and "dream" world is clouded, and banal conversation is interspersed with poetic profundity. Blok's work is unconventional and somewhat experimental in his juxtaposition of poetry and prose,[13] the poetry expressing mystical experiences in the drama.

The Unknown Woman is divided into three scenes. The first, a tavern scene, opens with drunken, inane conversation. A poet enters, drinks and speaks of a beautiful woman. At one point (and here we see the difficulties involved in presenting the play), the stage directions read:

> Gradually the walls of the beer-shop begin to revolve. The ceiling bends; one end stretches upward indefinitely. The ships on the wall paper seem to sail near, but they all cannot reach the shore. . .[14]

The writers Hauptmann and Verlaine are presented among the group of revellers and seem right at home. In a disgusting episode of low life (to be echoed in the final scene), a rowdy is told by the proprietor to stop fingering the crayfish.

The second scene is written in verse, in order to reflect the lofty aspirations of the poet, and also to contrast with the prosaic

banality of the scenes which frame it. It takes place on a bridge that same evening where an astrologer is observing the stars. The Unknown Woman and a Man in Blue speak in very poetic, almost metaphysical language. When she speaks of passion and love he falls asleep and disappears and so she offers herself to another man and they depart. The poet approaches, asking the astrologer for her whereabouts, but the astrologer has lost the rhythm of the stars and can offer no help.

The final scene occurs in a drawing room. While the social level is higher, the events of the tavern scene are mirrored: banal conversation, the fingering of cookies, a repetition of shouts of "Rochefort," "Camembert" and "Brí," and the appearance of the Unknown Woman. The scene ends with the poet alone, having lost his vision.

This work relates to one of Blok's foremost themes--the unknown woman, who, in his works, represents a once divine presence transformed into an attractive, elusive prostitute or wayward lady who cannot be identified. In the end, the interplay between dream and reality results in the ascendancy of vulgar reality.

Translated by Olive Frances Murphy, the three scenes of Blok's play are given a literal rendering. The translator does not attempt to reproduce Blok's complicated metrical play or his rhyme scheme,[15] in scene two. She omits the odd word, usually a "however" or something of this nature, but in scene two (p.105), she omits a whole line: "imenem, nežaščim slux,"[16] which would translate as "by a name caressing the ear."

She also makes some errors, although in most cases they are not significant to the overall meaning of the work, i.e. in scene one, p.54, she has the waiter hurrying away, when the Russian says "polovoj

podbegaet,"[17] (the waiter hurries up to the table), and in scene two, p. 97 she has the porters calling the poet a "drunken lout," when the Russian says merely a "posetitel' kabačka,"[18] or a frequenter of a tavern. She misses the distinction Blok is trying to play up between the "low" environment in scene one (the tavern) and the "high" one (the drawing room) in scene three, when she translates both "rošefor" and "rokfor" as "Rochefort." To be sure, there are other signals that the reader cannot miss.

As was the case with Puškin's translation, there are instances where the translator is not as lofty as the poet--i.e., she presents "face" (scene two, p. 97) for the Russian lik,[19] which, given the Russian, might have been more properly translated as "countenance," or "visage." In contrast, the translator can be more poetic than the poet, as when she translates "Nedvižna temnaja voda"[20] as "the darkened waves lie still" in scene two, p. 97.

While this is one of the most accurate translations transition was to publish from the Russian, one should not overlook the fact that by failing to approximate Blok's rhyme schemes or metrical play, the translator was omitting part of what could be termed experimentalist in this work.

The last poet encountered in transition is Sergej Esenin (1895-1925). Esenin began his literary career as one of the Peasant Poets who dressed in peasant fashion and who wrote fondly of harvests, meadows, farm animals, etc. His rhythms were fresh and captivating and revealed the experimental influence of the symbolists, particularly Bielyj. He later became the leading poet of the imaginists, who

believed in the dominance of the image over all other poetic elements. Never significant numerically, this movement died with Esenin's death.

Esenin appeared twice in transition. The first time, his poem "I'm Tired of Living in My Native Land," which was written in Russian in 1915-16 as "Ustal ja žit' v rodnom kraju," was printed in No. 2, May 1927. This poem (later published in transition Workshop) is filled with nature imagery and reflects both a longing for and rejection of the poet's native village. In an eerily foreboding passage, the poet speaks of hanging himself with his coat sleeve. In real life, Esenin, following a nervous breakdown, slashed his wrists in a hotel room, wrote a farewell poem in his own blood, and hanged himself.

"I'm Tired of Living in My Native Land" was translated by Gusta Zimbalist and Eugene Jolas. As mentioned earlier, it is likely that Ms. Zimbalist did the initial translation from the Russian, and that Jolas collaborated on the final version. As with Eastman's translation of Puškin, there has been no attempt in either this poem or the Moscow Tavern cycle to duplicate the rhyme scheme or meter of the originals. Zimbalist's translation is a more literal one than Eastman's, although there are a few mistakes in expression. In most cases these do not significantly affect the meaning, i.e. she translates prostor as "fields," instead of expanses, and zabor as "gate" instead of "fence." In one instance, however, she omitted an important phrase. She translated "I drug ljubimyj na menja/ Natočit nož za goleniše"[21] as "And there my beloved comrade/ Will sharpen his knife on his boot." Ignoring "na menja," she has neglected to add the significant "to get me" to her translation.[22]

Moscow Dive,[23] the other work, is really four separate poems

taken from Esenin's cycle on Moscow tavern life. This cycle reflects the last part of Esenin's life when he lived the vie de bohème. The opening poem speaks of the poet's having left his native village for Moscow, a city he has come to love. The remainder constitutes an impressionistic view of life in the bars. The poet describes the characters -- the accordian players, prostitutes, etc. -- and the reported speech (what there is of it) is that of the cafe habitués. Here, too, are several allusions to death.

The Moscow Dive cycle lists only Gusta Zimbalist-Jaryczower as translator. As in the first poem, there are some omissions, i.e. she leaves out the folksy znat' on p. 125 in the line "God ordained my death," and on p. 126 she omits Snova in the line "Here people drink and cry and fight," which would have added the sense of "they're at it again" to the line. There are also some minor errors. For example, she translates "nado mnoju"[24] on p. 125 as "Under me." On p. 128 she renders "molodaja krasivaja drjan'" as "outlived, beautiful dirt," when it should really be "young, beautiful trash." In this case the mistranslation is more significant because, in the original, Esenin is clearly striving for oxymoron. In the next lines, Zimbalist-Jaryczower translates "Ax, postoj. Ja ee ne rugaju/ Ax postoj. Ia ee ne kljanu" as "O wait! I'll not blame her/ O wait! I don't condemn her." In this instance she has both the tense and the meaning somewhat confused. A more accurate translation would read: "O wait! I am not abusing her./ O wait! I am not cursing her." By using the future tense, the translator has lost the duality present in the poet's speech in Russian, because he is saying that he does not condemn his lover, when, in fact, he has just done so.

Esenin was, and remains to this day, the foremost poet of the Russian countryside. He was a well-known maverick, unwilling to take a pro-revolutionary stance. In its selection of Esenin's poems, transition acquaints the readership with two of the most prominent aspects of his works, his affinity for the countryside and his description of bohemian life. However, in the original the poems are partially reflective of a break with traditional syllabo-tonic verse. Since the translator did not attempt an approximation of Esenin's metrical experimentation or his play with inexact rhyme, much of the innovational quality of his work was lost on transition's readership.

Mixail Zoščenko's (1895-1958) work appears in the June 1927 (No. 3) issue, along with scene two of Blok's play. Zoščenko, a member of the Serapion Brotherhood, was the major Soviet humourist of this period and enjoyed tremendous public favour.[25] According to the literary historian Marc Slonim, Zoščenko revealed the absurdities, distortions and psychological confusions of the early Soviet era. His hero is "the philistine, the half-educated citizen who, while using a badly digested Communist phraseology, remains avaricious, competitive, and narrow-minded."[26] A most important element of his style is what in Russian is termed skaz, a narrative mode oriented toward the oral, with a salient narrator figure. Zoščenko's discourse is usually composed of several linguistic levels including sub-standard speech, i.e. dialectism, vulgarism, etc., and often reflects a misunderstanding or only partial grasp on the part of the user of the words he utters. In the original, the narrator's "mistakes" often emerge as puns on the standard literary language. For this reason, of course, Zoščenko is a very difficult

author to translate.

The story in transition, "Foma the Faithless" (Foma nevernyj) relates the tale of Foma Krinkov, a peasant who receives a money order from his son in Moscow. Very surprised, Foma meditates on this and recalls having heard that the peasants are supposed to be in power. Putting "two and two together," Foma considers that, perhaps, his son now rules the empire. He becomes very upset when he cashes the money order at the post office because the money he receives has a peasant face on it, and therefore he thinks it is counterfeit. The cashier responds jeeringly, "It's your picture, your highness, instead of the czar's." Then Foma begins to act "high and mighty" and starts to believe he is in power and can do as he pleases. He gets into trouble with the law and is made aware that he is not the ruler of the land. The story ends with Foma driving home in his wagon muttering, "They lied, the devils."

There are a number of translational problems with this tale. Firstly, the title, although literally presented, becomes far more meaningful to the English reader when informed that Foma the Faithless is the Russian equivalent of Doubting Thomas, Foma meaning Thomas in Russian. Secondly, and more crucial, is the fact that the translator, Sophia Himmel, conveyed the style poorly, therefore losing much of the humour of the original. Although she usually rendered the Russian literally, or at least as literally as possible, she often failed to find an English equivalent for Zoščenko's racy Russian constructions, and as a result the English lacks the flavor of the original. For instance, while it is possible to translate celkovyj as "a silver ruble," the translator would have been closer to the peasant parlance of the original by using "bucks" or "smackers" as its equivalent in English.

The same is true of the word djadja. While Miss Himmel's translation as "Hey, uncle!" is literally accurate, it does not convey the same effect as the English "Hey, fella!" In English we simply do not call people "uncle" unless they are uncles. A further example is "grey devil." Miss Himmel's translation is literally accurate, but a better translation of "cert seryj" would have been "old coot."

Miss Himmel's stress on the verbatim, to the detriment of the English reader's appreciation of the text, is carried to the extreme in her complete lack of translation of the Russian word nu. She uses the exact Russian instead of translating it as "well?" or "and so?". Since this word does not exist in the Russian form in English, surely most readers could only guess at its meaning.

There are other instances, however, when Miss Himmel's translation, while not producing the humourous effects of the Russian, cannot be faulted, simply because there may not be an adequate way of translating the Russian into English and at the same time endowing it with the flavor of the Russian. For example, the humour in the question, "A kak že èto ja, djadja, ničego ne znaju i ničego ne vedaju?"[27] lies in the fact that Foma is using two words, one of them archaic, whose meaning is synonymous. The translator renders this as: "And how is it then, uncle, that I have heard nothing, that I know nothing about all this?" (p. 88). A similar situation exists with the word "dopolučit'." There does not seem to be such a word in standard Russian. The author has taken the word polučit' which means "to receive," and added to it the prefix "do" which connotes finishing, or reaching a certain point. Miss Himmel has translated the sentence in which this word occurs as "I am to receive money from my son . . ." (p. 87). Her translation does

not convey the redundancy existent in the Russian version. There are other instances where the translator has obliterated the humour of the Russian by literal translation when nothing else was possible. For example, Foma asks the cashier whose portrait is on his rouble, then says "Excuse my asking." In Russian this is "Izvini za slova."[28] While the translation is accurate, the point is that in English this is not particularly funny. In order to bring out the humour in the Russian, one would have had to think up some other phrase which would convey, although not literally, the incongruity of the Russian.

Everything considered, much of what made this story amusing has not been adequately presented in the English translation. Related in a literal, straight-forward fashion, there is very little left of the author's artistry. For the most part, Miss Himmel failed to find English equivalents of Zoščenko's folksy, incongruous, or ludicrous Russian phrasings. While the story was aptly chosen to render a creative approach to language which was in keeping with transition's canons, this approach was poorly demonstrated in the translation.

The short story by Vsevolod Ivanov (1895-1963) was published in Russian under several titles during 1926 and 1927 before appearing in transition as "The Old Timer" (No. 4, July 1927).[29] Like Zoščenko, Ivanov was a Serapion Brother. He was a practitioner of the literary style known as ornamentalism, which was characterized by a highly expressive language full of colloquialisms, archaisms, dialectisms, and rich verbal play including tropes of all kinds.[30] According to Gleb Struve, Ivanov exhibits an

> animistic attitude toward nature, which is made to

> participate in human joys and sorrows; the obvious influence of Russian folklore; the stress on the cruel, "bestial" aspects of the Revolution . . . and the utter detachment with which horrible things are narrated.[31]

"The Old Timer" ("Starik") is the story of Evsej Korolikov, a former servant of gentlemen, who returns to his village after the Revolution. Disgusted by the crude, "shiftless" behavior of the peasants around him, he lives isolated from them. The children nickname him "Simple Life," because of a favorite saying of his. He once jeeringly suggested that the peasants plant potatoes. They did so, and, ironically, it turned out to be a good idea and the village prospered. One day Evsej goes fishing and is distracted by a boy who continually torments him and scares away the fish. The boy begins to drown at the same time as Evsej's fishing pole is being carried away by a pike. Believing that the boy is going to be saved by some workers nearby, Evsej goes after his fishing pole and drowns. The villagers assume he died trying to save the boy and bury Evsej in a place of honour. The dead pike is later found by some children, but no one, not even the dog, wants it because it has already spoiled.

The ending of this work is abrupt and filled with irony. The narrator presents the story in the straight-forward, detached manner mentioned above. The new society following the Revolution is presented as really much the same as the old as far as the peasants are concerned. Their basic nature is unchanged. It was Evsej's suggestion, not the Revolution, which accounted for their relative prosperity. As for Evsej, all the Revolution meant to him was the loss of his livelihood, and there were no apparent positive aspects.

In general the translation of "The Old Timer" has many of the same faults we encountered in the previous work. While in the latter

case Miss Himmel failed to reproduce in the English the humour inherent in Zoščenko's use of language, in the Ivanov tale she has not found a means of adequately conveying the full range of his style, particularly the characteristics of peasant speech which give Ivanov's work its special quality. While in some cases it might not be possible to provide suitable equivalents in English, there are many instances where this was possible but not done. For example, on p. 68 we have "You try to keep bees with the calves, but they perish." In Russian, this is "Pčelu vot s teljatami vmeste udumali deržat', ona i podoxla,"[32] which could have been translated something like "You up and thought you'd keep bees with calves," or "You got yourself the 'idee' to keep bees with calves" which would have rendered the folksiness of the Russian udumat'. The same could be said about her rendition of Duj as "Go back" on p. 72.[33]

There are many errors in the translation, and they occasionally affect the reader's appreciation of Ivanov's style. On p. 68, Miss Himmel translates "a v grudi Evseja -- slovno vmesto serdca vyrosla kost',"[34] as "But Evsei's heart withered," when the Russian produces a far more striking image: "The heart in Evsei's chest seemed to turn to bone." On p. 69 Miss Himmel's mistranslation of plačut as "cry out" has negated Ivanov's image of the water lilies weeping with joy. While the personification is still there, it is, nonetheless, an entirely different image that is presented to the reader.

In another passage, the omission of several words implying uncertainty on the part of the narrator is highly significant because the translator failed to capture the change in the narrator's point of view. While up to this point the narrator had been omniscient, his

perspective suddenly changes, but this does not come through in English. Miss Himmel provides, on p. 71, the following:

> It is doubtful whether or not he heard it, even. A pike flung itself from the muddy water, the float dove at once, as if the water had swallowed it, and nearly all of the rod was drawn down. The handle began to breathe in Evsei's hand. For a moment, frightened by the unseen pain, the pike leaped up . . .

In the original, the element of uncertainty is much stronger:

> . . . da i slyšal li on ego, neizvestno. Ot mutnoj vody, čto li, v ego omutok metnulas' ščuka, potomu čto poplavok srazu rvanulo--slovno voda proglotila ego, leska tože počti celikom ušla v vodu, i udiliščе zadyšalo v ruke Evseja. Na mgnovenie, napugavšis', dolžno byt', nevidannoj boli . . . [35]

The underlined words indicate the following: (1) "one can't say," or "it isn't known," NOT, as Miss Himmel has it, "it is doubtful;" (2) "maybe it was because of the muddy water;" Miss Himmel omits this entirely; (3) "it must have been" or "Probably;" once again, there is nothing in the English to indicate the element of uncertainty on the part of the narrator who has switched to the limited understanding of Evsej.

In short, while the selection of "The Old Timer" was appropriate in terms of transition's norms, the translator's ineffectual rendition of Ivanov's peasant speech, striking images and narrator stance results in diminished reader appreciation.

Vladimir Lidin (1894- ) is the pseudonym of Vladimir G. Gomberg, who began his career as a short story writer before the Revolution. Lidin concentrates on aspects of the life of the Soviet workingman and student during the NEP period, and his stress is usually on the tawdry aspects of Soviet life at that time.

"The Sixth Door," an excerpt from a larger work,[36] was published in No. 5, August 1927. In the same issue, Elliot Paul comments on Lidin:

> He has scuttled the ship of Russian syntax, and given us vivid pictures and sonatas of Moscow as it is today . . .
> .....
> Some of the American writers may learn from Lidin, or at least be stimulated by him . . . His attitude is much like that expressed by Gertrude Stein in Composition as Explanation, that "everything being the same, everything is naturally different."[37]

There is very little plot in this fragment, only vignettes from Soviet life. People are depicted in terms of animals and display a Čexovian lack of understanding of their fellow human beings. Lidin's account includes scenes of bread lines, funerals, citizens nearly freezing, and obvious cases of inequality in a society officially dedicated to classlessness. The fragmentation evidenced in transition's excerpt is not typical of "The Sixth Door" as a whole. While certain images from part one continue through the entire work (e.g., descriptions of the city, machines racing along), the story later focuses on individuals. A basic theme is that only in mutual adversity do people exhibit compassion for each other, especially when they approach the sixth door, which signifies death for Lidin.

There are some rather elementary errors in Sophia Himmel's translation. In fact, they are so basic that one might wonder whether Miss Himmel was indeed Russian, as McMillan told us. For example, on p. 87 alone there are three very serious mistakes. Firstly, the famous poet Anna Axmatova is called Achmatov. Then, the phrase "Zanesite v protokol osoboe mnenie"[38] is translated as "bring in the record of the special opinion," rather than "enter into the minutes a special opinion." Obviously the translator was either not aware that the Russian verb

"zanesti" means "enter in, record" as well as "carry away" or simply did not understand the context.[39] Finally, Miss Himmel translates "èto u Nikoly Bogojavlennago na uglu,"[40] as "before Saint Nicholas in the presence of God." One cannot tell from this English phrase that "St. Nicholas in the Presence of God"[41] is the name of a church on the corner; indeed, it would appear that the translator missed this fact altogether, since she omitted "on the corner."

Miss Himmel's work is even more seriously flawed in that, as with previous selections, she fails to capture the flavor of Lidin's prose. For example, on p. 85 she renders "i medlenno vsasyvaetsja naveki prośitel' v mjagkij studen' nevidjaščix glaz"[42] as "and slowly she draws the applicant into a non-seeing stare." A more accurate transcription of Lidin's prose would be "and slowly the applicant is sucked in forever into the soft jelly of unseeing eyes."

In the opening paragraph, Lidin has created an atmosphere of cold dampness, and has even invested the locomotives themselves with the quality of dampness: "syro revut na vokzalax rannie parovozy."[43] Miss Himmel, instead of having the locomotives roar "damply" at the stations, has them roaring "raucously" (p. 84) into the stations. In this case the reader is never aware of what the author was trying to do.

In the same paragraph she ruins the author's attempt at anima-tion by translating "i nalípajut muxi na lipkij list'"[44] as "like flies upon a sticky sheet, men and women glue their paws and snouts to the bulletin boards." In Russian it is closer to "and flies adhere to the sticky sheet." There is no simile--the people ARE flies. Additionally, one can note from the underlined letters that this passage exhibits

certain sound repetitions which were typical of ornamentalist sound play of the time. None of this is conveyed in the translation.

In other instances, Miss Himmel omits or fails to capture the folksy, vulgar quality of character speech. One of several passages the translator omits contains an example of a folksy misuse of the new socialist slang. Himmel leaves out, on p. 91, the phrase: "Baba--èto glavnaja propaganda,"[45] which in English would be something like "A babe --that's the main propaganda," meaning, of course, the most important thing. On the same page she omits the phrase "Ne breši, suka," or, "Don't mouth off, you bitch." Again on the same page, a prostitute asks a sailor for a cigarette: "Tovariščˇ matrosik, ugosti papiroskoj. U tebja 'Ada'--vse est' čto nado, ili 'Riže'--pobliže da poniže. Ja bol'še 'Bal'nyja' ljublju, mundštuk dlinnyj."[46] Miss Himmel totally ignores the lilting, poetic quality of this passage and translates it as the drab, colourless: "Give me a cigarette sailor! Ada, Rige. Anything you want. I like Raini better, longer mouthpiece." She also, of course, loses the double meaning by translating "pobliže da poniže" as "Anything you want."

Finally, in view of Paul's statement about Lidin's scuttled syntax, it must be mentioned that Miss Himmel seems to have tried her best to rearrange Lidin's experimentalist structures into more normal English ones. In this way she has nearly obliterated an aspect of Lidin's work which would have been of interest to transition's readers. Not only was this done internally within sentences, but also new paragraphs were created in the English, where in the Russian unrelated ideas ran side by side within the same paragraph. An example on p. 87 will suffice. In the Russian, following on a description of a bread line,

we suddenly find: "Pronizyvajut tuman, mgu[47] xrap, drozdinye posvisty, leŝij voj--nosjatsja, kak černye djavoly, maŝiny--Figaro zdes'."[48] The translator begins a new paragraph here: "Autos penetrate the fog, mists of snores, myriad whistles, groans of wood demons, like black devils, a Figaro." By putting the subject of the sentence first, whereas in Russian it is nearly last, Miss Himmel loses the uncertainty existent in the Russian. There are many examples of this throughout the translation, and, although Lidin's confusing images still come through, Miss Himmel's "clearing up" of the syntax has done a disservice to the original.

Elliot Paul had ended his article on Lidin by asking rhetorically, "If all this takes place, is it not worth a few participles or adverbs?"[49] In my view, there is a certain irony in this question, because the work is so poorly translated that, in many cases, one cannot really see "all this" taking place. The translator failed to provide transition with a sufficiently faithful rendition of Lidin's work to demonstrate why he belonged on its pages. His ornamentalist style was lost in translation.

The September 1927 (No. 6) issue of transition contained a short story by Boris Pil'njak (1894-1941?), pseudonym of Boris Vogau. Pil'njak, who in all likelihood either perished or was shot in a concentration camp between 1937 and 1942, was a dominant figure in Soviet literature from 1921 to 1933. An inherently complex and formidable writer, Pil'njak presents a further problem in disentangling the chronology of his works. Many of his stories were published under varying titles, and some of these were later transplanted into other larger works, suggestive, perhaps, of what little significance traditional

compositional cohesion had for Pil'njak. Pil'njak's stories are full of digressions, lyrical prose, complicated syntax, and incomplete sentences. One ordinarily needs to re-read his works for fuller understanding.

transition printed the story, "That Which is Dead Calls Always," originally written in 1918 under the Russian title "Smertel'noe manit." It is the tale of Alena, a peasant woman, from birth to mid-life. Born in the forest, Alena was taught by her mother about nature--e.g., the healing qualities of plants. As a child she observed a student crossing a bridge who suddenly and unexpectedly plunged into the river. Her mother then warned her that dead things beckon to the living. She became engaged but had to call it off when her mother confessed that her betrothed was really her half-brother. Since Alena didn't marry by the age of twenty, it was unlikely that she ever would (according to village custom), so she went to live with a nobleman who had been impoverished by the Revolution: "The rules of our people are strict and simple. Everyone born must marry in springtime, bear children and then die. All who step away from this may arrange their lives as they wish." (p.12) This same tradition stated that it was not a sin for an old maid to work for a widower, so Alena, not having married in time, was free from constraints and could live with the nobleman without censure from society. She stayed there for five years, bore a child through whom she seemed at last to find a hold on life, and, after the child's death, went off to a convent. The narrator's concluding remarks indicate that Alena sinned only once, in the dark corridor of a monastery, for sin is sweetest near to God.

Pil'njak has related an intricate tale of peasant society in Russia after the Revolution. What is particularly noticeable in this

work are the strong ties of tradition in the face of a major social upheaval. In spite of the Revolution, life in the countryside goes on in much the same fashion as it always has. The only mention of the Revolution is in the depiction of the impoverished nobleman.

With regard to the translation, Miss Himmel's performance is only slightly better in this case than in the previous work. She begins by clumsily translating the title, which would better reflect the Russian as "Death Beckons." As with Lidin, she renders fragmented syntax into a smoother English version. It is curious that she translates "Alena rodilas' v lesnoj storožke"[50] as "Alena was born in a forest sentry-box;" it would be rather difficult for anyone to give birth in a sentry-box and perhaps a different term would have been desirable.

There are a number of instances where Miss Himmel seems to have difficulty with the Russian. For example, on p. 9, she translates the leaves from St. John's wort as having "persistent virtues," for the Russian "list'ev nastoennye."[51] In this case she seems to have confused the two meanings of the Russian nastojat'/nastaivat'. In fact, Pil'njak is saying that the leaves when brewed are good for colds in the chest. In another instance, Miss Himmel totally confuses the meaning of "ne grex, esli ko vdove zaezžajut počtari so stancii"[52] by making počtari the object of the sentence. It should read "it is no sin if mailcarriers from the postal station drop by the widow's [house]" instead of ". . . if a widow drives in mailcarriers from the station." In one case, the Russian so clearly indicates the title of a book that one wonders how Miss Himmel could get "Polunin taught Alena the alphabet and read about life with her" from "Polunin učil Alenu gramote i čital s nej Žitija."[53] One would think that most Russians would be aware that Žitija means

Lives of the Saints.

In Pil'njak's case the selection of "That Which is Dead Calls Always" is not a fortuitous one, for it is a relatively traditional tale and offers little of interest to an experimental journal.

The first break since No. 2 now occurs. There is no Russian literature in No. 7. The thread is picked up again with No. 8, in which a story by Pantelejmon Romanov (1884-1938) is printed. In many of the works of Romanov, an established writer before the Revolution, one finds the melodramatic, often bordering on bad taste. His considerable popularity in the 1920s can be ascribed, in part, to his characterization of Soviet youth with their scepticism and loose sexual mores.

transition published Romanov's "Black Cakes" ("Černye lepeški") in November 1927. It relates the story of a peasant woman, Katerina, who comes to Moscow from the countryside, searching for her husband. She has heard that he has become a chairman at the factory and is now living with another woman. Although she had planned to rage at him and tear her hair out, presumably typical behavior in her village under such circumstances, she is so confused by the city (particularly after getting lost, arriving at the wrong house, etc.) that she throws herself into her husband's arms when she finally arrives at his door.

Katerina finds her husband markedly changed and quite sophisticated, making her extremely conscious that she belongs to a world he left behind. When the mistress arrives, Katerina is astonished to find not a robust peasant type like herself, but, instead, "a chest like a board and nothing at all in back." Almost in spite of herself she hands the black cakes she had prepared for her journey to the mistress as a

gift. Confused by the mistress's talk about politics, Katerina tries to make conversation by speaking about Liska, her cow. She is further embarrassed by her inability to use silverware at dinner. The next day she returns to the village, having accepted a gift for the children and six roubles. Still confused by all that has happened, Katerina tries to anticipate her response to questions from the villagers.

While this work is not stylistically experimental, it does depart from tradition in that Romanov depicts the freer sexual ethics which emerged during the Soviet 1920s. The peasant woman elicits the sympathy of the reader in her confusion over what has happened to family life at this time. The kindness and understanding displayed by her husband and his mistress, presumably symbols of the new order, coupled with the generally positive depiction of Katerina, would seem to indicate that the author is not ill-disposed to the new society.

Sophia Himmel's translation offers the same problems we have come to expect. Her renditions are too literal: she translates Tetka[54] as "Auntie" instead of "dearie;" Matuška[55] as "Little Mother" instead of "O dear" or "Good Lord;" and Batiuški[56] as "Little Father" instead of "Saints Alive." "Naletet' na nego uraganom"[57] becomes "blown upon him like a storm" instead of the more striking image of "sweep down on him like a hurricane." Miss Himmel fails to provide an appropriate English equivalent for such folksy expressions as "ty čto tut tkaeš'sja?";[58] "Ispužalas' djuže"[59] and "do užasti."[60] Additionally, one can find outright errors: "kakoj-to čelovek v fartuke, so stameskoj v ruke"[61] is translated as "some man in a cap with wrench in his hand" instead of "some man in an apron with a chisel in his hand."

Closer to the realists than to the experimental writers of the

teens and twenties, Romanov's style offers little novelty to transition's readers. His attention to peasant speech is what might have been of interest, but that was rendered lifeless by the mediocre translation.

Konstantin Fedin (1892- ) maintained close ties with the traditions of the nineteenth century. He wrote under the influence of Čexov and Gorkij and later became a foremost socialist realist. He also exhibited some ties to German expressionism.[62] The oldest member of the Serapion Brotherhood, Fedin was originally linked in the 1920s to the revival of the novel, based on his works Cities and Years and The Brothers.

"The Garden" (No. 9, December 1927) was written in 1919-20 and first published as "Sad" in Russian in 1922. It was also included in transition Stories, published in 1929. The protagonist of the story is an old gardener, Silantij, who attempts to maintain an orchard intact after the former owners of the estate have disappeared during the Revolution. In spite of Silantij's efforts, the orchard falls into ruin, and the new authorities are unwilling to send him the manpower needed to keep it up. The "last straw" for Silantij is when the new regime turns the old manor house into a home for children. The children care little for the property and are chased off by Silantij when they begin to damage the trees. Reprimanded by their teacher, Silantij at last gives up, and, when the group goes off to town he sets fire to the orchard.

In "The Garden" we find one of Fedin's recurrent themes: the clash between the old and new in Soviet Russia. There is also an implied criticism of the new system, which will not assist the old gardener in preserving the orchard. The teacher-guardian of the children, a

representative of the new order, also exhibits a lack of understanding of both Silantij and the values he is trying to maintain.

Sophia Himmel's translation is again characterized by inaccuracies and zestless English equivalents.[63] On p. 85 she renders "'Why so early?' said Silanti" for the Russian "Čtoj-to rano?--uxmyl'nulsja Silantij."[64] The Russian uxmyl'nulsja would be translated more properly as "smirked," not "said," and thus Miss Himmel has lost the irony of the original. In another instance she omits two adjectives which had lent irony to the passage. While she gives "And Silanti sat there, motionless, his hands around his knees" (p. 86) while he watches the fire, the Russian image describes Silantij's hands as "žilistymi rabočimi,"[65] or muscular, workman's hands. The irony in the Russian, of the worker destroying rather than building, is considerably mitigated by the translator's omission of the adjectives. She also omits the sounds of the women calling to each other in the field: "Mašutka-a-au! Podi maščipi močalki-i!"[66] In doing so, Miss Himmel removes the lively quality of the scene, which was meant to contrast sharply with what followed: "Nynče bylo tixo, bezmolvno."

The translator seems to have particular difficulty with dialogue, which, under her direction, loses its colloquial flavor. The following will serve as an example:

> --ne axti kakaja mudrost'--kirpič! A i to ničego u nix ne kleitsja. Taščut tebe i dnem i noč'ju, a vorov net![67]
>
> What useful things bricks are. Even then they are not satisfied. They are after us day and night. And thieves??[68]

A more colloquial rendering would produce:

> No big deal making bricks. And even so they don't know how to do that. They steal them on you day and night. But of course there's no robbers!

Additionally, Miss Himmel does not attempt to provide equivalents for Fedin's ungrammatical "folkisms," e.g. "Podi sxodi v Sovet-to ixnij"[69] becomes "Go into their world."[70] Here, Fedin's peasant has made an adjective from the word ix, which in English might be akin to "that there Soviet/Council of theirs" in context.

Apart from the possible thematic interest of the neglect of traditional values, Fedin's colloquialisms and folk expressions might have attracted the attention of Jolas. Unfortunately, the translator's stilted rendering of these characteristics erected a real barrier to appreciation.

Lidija Sejfullina (1889-1954) appears in No. 10, January 1928. Her early works are mostly valued for their documentary portrayal of village life during the Revolution and the ensuing Civil-War period. A realistic writer, Sejfullina describes not only the deprivations existing during the early years of the Revolution and its aftermath, but also the beneficent effects of the Revolution on the Russian peasantry. She has an eye for detail and it is basically this talent for which she is remembered.

"The Golden Childhood" describes the effects of the Revolution on homeless children. The story opens with the rounding up and transfer of six children to some kind of social agency which is unable to deal with them. They had all been there before, at least individually. The children discuss their trade--thievery. One of them asks an agency worker for a puff of her cigarette. The woman is horrified: "You smoke? A child of your age!" Her indignation is softened by the hungry child's answer: "Smoking kills my appetite." The children observe a

woman with a child at her skirt and a baby in her arms begging for food, who, upon receiving no aid, asks: "What am I to do, choke them?" The janitress comments that there have been fifty-seven children in the agency that day and there will be more tomorrow. The story ends with the children being turned out for the night to fend for themselves before returning the next day.

Sejfullina's style is not experimentalist, with the possible exception of some of the reported speech which tends to be filled with dialectisms in the original. In "The Golden Childhood," she displays a journalist's method of observation. The title is, of course, filled with irony.

The aspect of Sejfullina's work which would have attracted transition's editors was her attention to reported speech. Unfortunately, as we have seen in so many cases, the translator was not able to capture the essence of the original. For example, Miss Himmel makes no attempt to approximate in English the Russian zavizit.[71] A child's mispronunciation of the Russian zavizžit, (and this is emphasized by the fact that it was uttered by the smallest child) the translator might have conveyed the poignancy of the utterance by giving "scweam" instead of the totally normal "scream."

Additionally, Miss Himmel fails to translate some of the "street" talk. She omits "Mužik--tot dast, tak dast"[72] which one might convey in English as "A fella--if he gives it to you, you really get it." In other instances, the translator does not capture the dialectical or peasantish aspect of the dialogue. She fails to find suitable English equivalents for the Russian puščaj (used instead of the correct form, puskaj), pokeda for (poka) or odeža (for odežda).

Finally, many of Miss Himmel's English renderings fall into the category of inadequate or poor translations because they fail to capture the Russian idiom in English. She translates "Ugasšij mudryj vzgljad na malen'kom s kulačok lice"[73] as "He had an extinct expression of wisdom upon his face." Not only is the Russian incomplete through the omission of the highly expressive "s kulačok" but the English "extinct," while technically correct, does not convey the feeling of horror and despair that the use of such a word to describe the visage of an eight-year-old child elicits. Similarly, her translation of "na zemlistom, xudom lice"[74] as "thin and worldly face" (p. 44) is misleading. The Russian zemlistom in this case has an entirely different connotation than the English "worldly;" rather, it refers to "earthen," i.e. close to the grave.

Sejfullina's depiction of stark reality sometimes borders on the grotesque and the incredible. For this reason, as well as for the above-mentioned attention to reported speech, she deserves a better translation.

transition omits Russian literature for the next three numbers and publishes its final Russian text in No. 14, Fall 1928. This text is by Aleksej Novikov-Priboj (1877-1944),. a professional sailor who had begun writing before the Revolution but was not published until 1917. Novikov-Priboj is known mostly as an author of vivid but unpretentious sea yarns written from a pro-revolutionary standpoint.

The work in question, "Beyond the City," dates from 1919-20.[75] The story opens with four White soldiers escorting a captured Red to the outskirts of the city for execution. Two of the soldiers are on foot, and two, officers, are mounted on horses. No one knows the man's

name or exactly why he is to be executed. The city is in a state of siege, the Reds are closing in. A sort of camaraderie develops between the guards and the prisoner, who resembles the brother of one of the guards. They seem to be brought closer together by the imminent spectre of death and by their shared military experiences. Suddenly shots ring out and the two guards on horses ride off to see what is happening. The other two guards decide to let the prisoner go. The prisoner is afraid that he will be shot, but, nonetheless, runs off when he is ordered to do so. The guards run in the opposite direction, discharging their rifles in the air.

Novikov-Priboj's work presents the most positive response to the new regime of all the Russian works encountered in transition. While not commenting directly on the action, it is clear that the author creates sympathy for the Red who is about to be executed. The soldiers who free the condemned man are from the same class and their sympathy toward one another is in conformity with official Soviet ideology which teaches that class ties are stronger than factional ones.

Like Sejfullina, Novikov-Priboj was not an experimentalist writer, and the only special interest his work might have had for the readership of transition involved his reproduction of reported speech. In such a case the quality of the translation becomes overriding.

As we have come to expect, difficulties abound, and are all too familiar: no English equivalent, failure to capture the flavor of the original, and inaccurate rendering of the Russian into English. Miss Himmel continues to insert Russian words--nu, sagens, likvidir and verst--into the text. She translates the racy Russian into mediocre clichés--e.g. "idol čumnoj"[76] becomes "good-for-nothing" (p. 262) instead

of the stronger "pestilent idol" or some other "choice" equivalent; pešedralom[77] becomes "on foot" (p. 264) instead of the more colloquial "hoofing it;" and "mne naplevat'"[78] becomes the literal "I spit on it" (p. 265) instead of "I don't give a damn." She incorrectly translates portjanok-to[79] as "leggings" (p. 263) instead of "foot-wraps" and usmexajas'[80] as "smilingly" (p. 262) when the point would have been better served with "smirkingly." She even confuses the subject and direct object: "Smuščaet i prigovorennyj"[81] is translated as "The condemned man is also disturbed" (p. 264) when in Russian it reads: "The condemned man also disturbed him."

Novikov-Priboj's work offered transition's readers a vignette of the harsh realities existing in the wake of the Revolution. His skillful use of dramatic tension holds the reader's attention to the end. Still, there was little, aside from the reproduction of language, which would have entitled it to inclusion in an experimentalist journal. Unfortunately, the poor quality of the translation obscured even this positive aspect.

## Chapter 4

## AN ASSESSMENT

### Quality and Representativeness of Russian Works Selected

Viewing the Russian writers from the perspective of 1978, it is manifestly clear that Jolas and Paul published some works which were neither experimental nor particularly exceptional in other ways. However, the authors who were published, if not the individual works selected by transition, have stood the test of time and are, to varying degrees, fairly well known in the Soviet Union.

The authors selected were generally typical of writing in the Soviet Union during the twenties, although Puškin, of course, is anomalous. By and large, the works chosen for the individual writers were also representative of what they were producing during this era. A notable exception would be Pil'njak's "That Which is Dead Calls Always." At his best, Pil'njak's work exhibits qualities similar to a musical form, showing

> abrupt changes of mood, accelerating rhythms, staccato conversations, and the deliberate creation of extended poetic images to convey the inner life of a character . . .[1]

Since these qualities are lacking in the transition story, it would be fair to say that the journal did not provide a representative selection.

At this point it would be appropriate to raise the question of responsibility for the Russian texts selected. As indicated in Chapter 1, Elliot Paul seems to have been the editor most involved with Russian literature. In a letter to this writer, Mrs. Eugene Jolas, while asserting her husband's overall responsibility for the journal, commented

that it was Elliot Paul's friend, Sonia [sic] Himmel, who recommended most of the Russian works which appeared in transition.[2] In a later letter, in response to the query of responsibility for selection, Mrs. Jolas replied:

> One of the failures, probably, was that at the time when the Russian revolution had shocked the world into enthusiasm (or horror), he [Jolas] knew no Russian, and had many doubts as to the future of the spirit in the type of world announced by that revolution and consequently he was dependent on others for interpretation of it.[3]

Thus it would seem that Miss Himmel recommended the texts to Elliot Paul and that he was most responsible for the Russian works which appeared in transition.

In view of Paul's apparent responsibility here, a few words about his reputation as an editor are in order. McMillan mentions Paul's taste for American realism, and his interest in Gertrude Stein, but states that

> strangely he had little appreciation for similar experimental efforts among the French, and frequently had to be convinced by Jolas of the value of writers who later turned out to be important literary figures.[4]

Putnam considers Paul's influence to have been prominent during transition's first year and quotes Mrs. Jolas' remark that Paul, "through his meager knowledge of French and unfamiliarity with any other foreign language, was only superficially aware of what was being written in Europe."[5] Putnam further quotes Mrs. Jolas' view that Paul had at first opposed the inclusion of writers such as Breton and the surrealists until Jolas' "usually rather excited analysis brought final agreement and, more than often, later enthusiasm."[6] If we can believe McMillan and Putnam (who remarks that, in all fairness, Paul's side of the story should be told), it would appear that Elliot Paul's taste in literature

tended to be rather staid, and this might account, in part, for the omission of the futurists and other patently experimentalist Russian authors.

## Omission of the Russian Futurists

With respect to experimentation, what is particularly noteworthy is transition's obvious omission of anything from the Russian futurists. Many of the works of non-Russians published in issues of transition bear a profound resemblance to the futurists.[7] Even the editorial stance, as exhibited in essays and proclamations, had many parallels with the futurist manifestos.

The futurists were not the only avant-garde group of writers to be ignored by transition. The constructivist writers, for example, were not represented. However, the crucial point for our study is that the futurists had similarities with the dadaists and thus would seem to have offered much of interest to Jolas' journal. In commenting that Russian futurism had nothing in common with the Italian movement, D.S. Mirsky stated that,

> If one were obliged to point out any Western movement most like the first stages of Russian Futurism, it would be the French Dada movement.[8]

Steiner mentions:

> By far the most interesting exercises in neologism in Western literature are those performed by Russian futurists and by Dada and the Surrealists . . .[9]

Finally, Stephen Scobie, in his article on sound poetry, states that,

> The insistence on the "transrational," on the immediate emotional impact of pure sound bypassing the intellect, identifies the central position of Kruchenykh's [futurism] manifesto with those of Hugo Ball [dada] . . .[10]

In view of the foregoing, the absence of the Russian futurists

from the pages of transition would surely seem an enigma (bearing in mind that transition did publish a statement by the Italian futurist Marinetti entitled "Futurist Standards of Measurement.") However, two possible explanations can be posited. Firstly, it is conceivable that the editors were ill-advised and were not fully aware of twentieth-century currents in Russian literature. If Elliot Paul was mainly responsible for the choice of Russian material (as we concluded in the last section), then Jolas was particularly ill-advised, since, according to many of Paul's contemporaries, his taste in foreign literature was conservative.

Still, it is highly unlikely that Eugene Jolas would have been totally unaware of Russian futurism. For example, one of the Russian futurists from the 41° branch in Tiflis, Ilija Zdanevič (known as Iliazd), had moved to Paris and joined the dadaists. Zdanevič was a close friend of Paul Eluard, and Eluard (along with his Russian wife Gala) was a close friend of Jolas:

> There were days when Eluard, Noll and I would wander all over Paris in search of primitive objects for Eluard's collection. We would visit the flea-market . . .[11]

That Jolas was aware of Zdanevič is certain, for, according to Scobie:

> As late as 1948, Eugene Jolas, writing a history of sound poetry for transition, knows of zaum only through Iliazde, whom he mistakenly describes as its inventor.[12]

A recently published catalogue of an exhibition at the Pompidou Museum in Paris[13] shows that Iliazd was a party to numerous exhibitions in Paris during the twenties, often in collaboration with French dadaists and surrealists.

It is also possible that Jolas could have known about Russian futurism through his acquaintance with Louis Aragon. Aragon, married to Elsa Triolet, the sister-in-law of Osip Brik,[14] was a close friend of

Majakovskij, the futurist poet.[15] In fact, Majakovskij himself was in Paris several times.[16]

In short, given Jolas' acquaintances and the exhibitions going on in Paris, to say nothing of the man's perceptive qualities, the first explanation seems very doubtful. The alternative possibility is that the editors were aware of the futurist current, but because the generally pro-Soviet ideational message of the futurists after the Revolution would not have been in harmony with the critical posture of the other Russian stories selected for transition, the editors chose to ignore them. This latter thesis seems more probable in view of the omission of some of the other prominent authors of the time (sympathetic to the new regime) whose works in many cases were more adventurous than the ones chosen by transition. While transition published, as we have seen, works generally expressing a negative, or, at most, ambivalent attitude toward the Revolution and its aftermath, they ignored those writers who were partisan to the new regime: V. Majakovskij, F. Gladkov, A. Fadeev, D. Furmanov, A. Serafimovič and M. Šoloxov, etc. Whatever the reason for this omission, in the final analysis it can be stated that transition gave a very incomplete picture of what was happening on the literary scene in the Soviet Union during the twenties.

This can be seen by placing the Russian futurists within the cultural context of avant-garde movements in Europe, particularly those for which Jolas had an affinity. In this way we hope to contribute to an overall understanding of the significance of the futurists' exclusion. Because Jolas saw his own theories as an extension of dada, we will concentrate on the traits which the Russian futurists shared with dada.

Futurism was a revolt against the schools and traditions of

the past. Dada, along with many modern movements, partook of this revolt. However, dada was far more cynical, for it not only mirrored what it considered the meaninglessness of past civilization, but also saw no hope for the future.[17]

Both futurism and dada enjoyed "succès de scandale." The public appearances of both groups were outrageous. Their eccentric, at times brutish, behavior often resulted in scandals or brawls.[18]

While Russian futurism preceded dada by several years, both groups lost their vitality by the early 1920s. There is often confusion when the question of influence arises. Hans Richter comments:

> Curiously enough, Dada tendencies seem to have made their first appearance in Russia, where Futurist influence was still very strong . . . Tzara mentions other Russian Dadaists, Krutchony and Terentieff, of whom I know nothing more than that they, together with Zdanevich (who played a not unimportant part in Paris Dada . . .) formed the 41 group.[19]

Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, in his introduction to Zdanevič's drama LidantJU fAram, Paris, 1923, also points up the similarities between dada and 41°:

> Le sens de la destruction des idées acquises et de toutes les conventions, la ruine de ce qui l'on aimait le mieux est une des propriétés communes au degré 41 et à Dada.[20]

In fact, there has been some controversy over whether or not Hugo Ball's Lautgedichte were inspired by the futurists' "zaumnyj jazyk" (zaum for short). Raoul Hausmann claims:

> . . . il est hors de doute, que Ball n'avait pas fait une si étonnante invention par son propre génie, mais qu'il était inspiré par ses précurseurs russes, les Khlebnikov, Khroutchenykh et Kandinsky, qui, à l'origine, étaient, à côté de Scheerbart et de Morgenstern, les véritables inventeurs de la poésie phonétique.[21]

In another article Hausmann argues that Kandinsky acquainted Ball with Xlebnikov's zaum before Ball himself began writing sound poetry, but

J.C. Middleton, in an editorial note to this article, comments that the similarities between Ball and Xlebnikov could have been the result of independent but converging experiments.[22]

While the question of the relationship of Russian futurism to dada needs further specific exploration, we can at least agree with Markov that futurism reflected the "evolution in the literatures of the Western world from Arthur Rimbaud to Dadaism."[23] Many of the characteristics which Russian futurism held in common with dada were similar to those existent in other modern movements. Renato Poggioli, for example, comments:

> . . . some of Krucenyx's ideas. . . anticipate even the doctrines of the Surrealists, who . . . are but the children or grandchildren of the Symbolists.[24]

In the latter instance, Poggioli refers specifically to the anticipation by Kručenyx of the hypotheses on which the surrealists based their automatic writing.

In summary, many of the similarities between Russian futurism and dada were "in the air" at the time, as part of the general avant-garde scene. This includes, of course, their proclivity for writing manifestoes and proclamations, often designed to outrage the sensibilities of their readers. In this regard, it is enlightening to compare a Russian futurist manifesto with Jolas' "Revolution of the Word" proclamation, with special attention to the attitude towards the renovation of language:

JOLAS:

The Revolution in the English language is an accomplished fact.
The literary creator has the right to disintegrate the primal matter of words imposed on him by text-books and dictionaries.
He has the right to use words of his own fashioning and to disregard existing grammatical and syntactical laws.[25]

FUTURIST: Words die, the world stays young forever. An artist has seen the world in a new way, and, like Adam, he gives his own names to everything. A lily is beautiful, but the word "lily" is soiled with fingers and raped. For this reason I call a lily "euy" . . . and the original purity is reestablished.

New verbal form creates a new content, and not vice versa.

Introducing new words, I bring a new content, where everything begins to slide (shift) . . .[26]

and

JOLAS: The expression of these concepts can be achieved only through the rhythmic "hallucination of the word."

The writer expresses. He does not communicate.[27]

FUTURIST: Thought and speech cannot catch up with the emotional experience of someone inspired; therefore, the artist is free to express himself not only in a common language (concepts), but also in a private one (a creator is individual), as well as in a language that does not have a definite meaning (is not frozen), that is transrational. A common language is binding, a free one allows more complete expression . . .[28]

The similarities between these two documents are striking. Both were concerned with freeing the poetic word from what was perceived as the extreme literariness of the artistic tradition. Thus, given these similarities in theoretical outlook, it is most curious that Jolas completely neglected the Russian futurists. There is, however, one element in Jolas' proclamation which has no counterpart in the futurist manifesto: "We are not concerned with the propagation of sociological ideas, except to emancipate the creative elements from the present ideology."[29] By the time that Jolas was publishing transition, the Russian futurists had long been known for their support of the communist regime and perhaps this tended to override other, more aesthetic aspects

for Jolas.

Turning from a consideration of Jolas' "Revolution of the Word" proclamation, it is especially fitting to examine the relationship of the dada sound poem to Russian zaum. In his subtext called "Dada in Paris," Georges Hugnet, while mistakenly asserting that Zdanevič collaborated with Xlebnikov in the creation of zaum, comments that it was "not unrelated" to the dadaist poem.[30] Jolas, with his intensive interest in the renovation of language, devoted considerable space in transition to sound poetry, both theoretical articles and examples. Jolas was himself a practitioner of sound poetry and many of the sound poems published in transition were reminiscent of Kručenyx's suggestive, although logically meaningless phonemic sequences.

Without becoming embroiled in the controversy over who "discovered" what we variously term zaum, Lautgedicht, poème phonétique and "sound poetry," one can at least admit that these concepts hold many traits in common, and that, at times, they are difficult to distinguish, one from the other. Jolas, in his article on sound poetry, would seem to trace this strain back to Lewis Carroll's writing of "'twas brillig, and the slithy toves" in Through the Looking-Glass,[31] although its roots probably lie in a far more primitivistic society. In any case, sound poetry represented the outer limit to which poets could free the word from all meaning.

Sound poetry encompassed a wide variety of specimens. In Russian, it covered both Kručenyx's contrivance of meaningless sounds:

dir, bull, schchill,
oubeshchour
skoom

vi so boo
r l ehz[32]

and the lively hilarity of Xlebnikov's "Zakljatie smexom" ("Incantation

by Laughter"):

O, rassmejtes', smexači!
O, zasmejtes', smexači!
Čto smejutsja smexami, čto smejanstvujut smejal'no.
O, zasmejtes' usmejal'no!
O rassmesišč nadsmejal'nyx--smex usmejnyx smexačej!
O, issmejsja rassmejal'no, smex nadsmejnyx smejačej!
Smejevo, smejevo,
Usmej, osmej, smešiki, smešiki,
Smejunčiki, smejunčiki,
O, rassmejtes', smexači!
O, zasmejtes', smexači![33]

While transition did not publish these or other Russian sound poems, it did publish Jolas' previously-cited "Faula and Flona" and Tristan Tzara's "Toto Vaca":

ka tangi te kivi
kivi

ka tangi te moho
moho

tike

he poko anahe
to tikoko tikoko

heare i te hara
tikoko . . .[34]

and A.L. Gillespie Jr.'s "Monograph for Harold Weston's 'Evo-Love Series':"

water water cast-ups gulpends, water
(ulploam

water onduwater sheell shell pseudreamdream suffice

pulsthug yawconsch wave
trytugs evolupotent water . . .[35]

and, finally, Hugo Ball's "Wolken" or "Clouds":

elomen elomen lefitalominai
wolminuscaio
baumbala bunga
acycam glastala feirofim flinsi[36]

Thus, while publishing sound poetry from other sources, particularly dada, Jolas never attempted to include Russian zaum, which, as has been demonstrated, had a distinct affinity with dada sound poetry.

## Translational Considerations

A crucial consideration when assessing the Russian literature appearing in transition is that those writers who were experimental did not receive the translation they merited. Sophia Himmel, a friend of Elliot Paul's, did most of the translations, and we have amply documented her shortcomings. Jolas never claimed that his journal's translations approached excellence, and was aware of some of the problems. He was willing to sacrifice perfection in the interest of providing a broad range of new material.[37] Nonetheless, a random sample of Jolas' own translations indicates that his work, while tending to be more literal than one might have expected, does not exhibit the errors and misjudgements of Miss Himmel's endeavours.

Much of what constituted a given author's right to be termed "experimental" at this time was tied up with the Russian language itself. Colloquialisms, dialectisms, sub-standard speech, neologisms, garbled syntax, various levels of verbal play are all extremely difficult to render in translation and were obviously beyond the means of the journal's translators. While Jolas was himself a poet, and moreover trilingual, his linguistic skills did not extend to Russian, and thus his expertise was lost here. These points, coupled with the previously mentioned information about lack of funds for translators, help to explain why Russian literature, although promoted for a time, did not receive all the consideration it merited in a journal devoted to experimentalism.

## Chapter 5

## CONCLUSION

In concluding this study we must pose the essential question of to what extent the inclusion of Russian literature in transition contributed to the main objective of Jolas' publishing venture. Summarizing this objective, we might state that it was to bridge the gap between Europe and the United States by introducing and promoting avant-garde writers, particularly those who were experimenting with the renovation of artistic language.

While the overwhelming majority of writers published by transition was American and English, the editors were very conscious of what they perceived as their responsibility to acquaint English-language readers with the best of modern European literature. In this respect transition was following a well-established publishing tradition of "little" magazines, and Russian literature, while its life-span in transition was relatively short, was published along with other European literatures. After 1928, transition ceased including Russian literature, although it continued to publish other European literatures, sometimes in the original language, sometimes in translation.

While some of the Russian writers exhibited a creative approach to language in keeping with transition's canons, much of what made their works experimentalist was poorly demonstrated in the translations. To the lost elements belong ornamentalist qualities involving low vernacular, archaisms and dialectisms. Unusual syntactical plays also proved to be a problem for Sophia Himmel, transition's most prolific translator.

Some selections seemed rather traditional. Pantelejmon Romanov and Aleksej Novikov-Priboj, for example, were not experimental writers. It is likely that Elliot Paul was responsible for the inclusion of the Russian writers, and his taste in foreign literature tended to be either uninformed or conservative. He also appeared to be overly reliant on Sophia Himmel for suggestions, and her expertise in Russian was questionable, given her occasional errors in handling some basic Russian expressions and cultural concepts.

By failing to include any Russian futurist works, transition gave a very incomplete picture of avant-garde developments in twentieth-century Russian literature. This was found to be particularly remarkable in view of the fact that the futurists shared many traits with other experimental groups which were given prominent display in transition, notably dada. The linguistic experiments of the early Russian futurists were designed to enrich the poetic language and broaden the range of poetic expression, thus exhibiting an affinity with Jolas' own approach to the freeing of the word.

While Jolas might have found the political stance of the futurists in the 1920s objectionable, there were Russian futurist works from the teens which would have suited his programme well. These were without the socio-political bias which he found so distasteful. Although the Soviet Union was still quite tolerant of experimentation until the late 1920s, it did not put much stock in transrational poetry. Indeed, some of the most experimental futurist works tended to come from pre-revolutionary writers. Clearly the presentation of earlier, pre-Soviet works would not have been an obstacle in publishing the futurists. Since transition published other pre-revolutionary

writers (Puškin, Blok and some of Esenin's writings were all pre-revolutionary), it could also have published the earlier futurists, especially those who were experimenting with zaum, which was so closely related to the sound poetry being exhibited in transition.

An important stumbling block to presenting the futurist works might have been the problem of translation. The futurists' experiments tended to be so intimately linked with the language from which they sprang, that they were extremely difficult to render in translation (although some poets like Kručenyx tried for universality through vowel poems). Still, the organic ties to the spirit of the parent language were strong. As we have seen, Jolas' Russian translators were barely up to the task of rendering relatively traditional Russian works. Nothing indicates that they could have coped with the task of translating the much more esoteric writings of Russian futurists.

While Jolas did not know Russian, he was aware of the existence of the futurists, although it is unclear precisely when and to what degree he was familiar with them. We know from his article on sound poetry in 1948, in which he mentions zaum in connection with dada, that he mistakenly thought Iliazd had invented zaum. It is highly likely, given Jolas' connections with Paris dada, that he was at least aware of Iliazd (who had been a Russian futurist from 41° as well as a party to Paris dada) in the 1920s, and perhaps through Iliazd of Russian futurism.

There is no doubt that Russian futurism would have been in keeping with Jolas' objectives. As we have seen, the manifestoes of the early futurists bear a striking resemblance to Jolas' "Revolution of the Word" proclamation. In addition, Jolas published sound poetry

from several other languages (but always in the original) while ignoring Russian transrational poetry. Because he did not choose to exclude Russian writing from his conception of European literature -- indeed, he called attention to it in two prominent displays in December 1927 and January 1928 -- it might be said that his failure to recognize the Russian futurists was a major shortcoming for a journal which touted itself as breaking down language barriers and liberating expression.[1]

To what extent did Russian literature contribute to transition's objectives? Despite the inclusion of modern Russian poetry and prose (particularly that of the Serapion Brothers and other "Fellow-Travellers," who were indeed representative of the Soviet literary scene in the 1920s), because transition omitted the futurist writers, whose works had so many affinities to the dada group, transition failed to meet its objectives. Had the journal's goals been more exclusive, and had its editor been less oriented toward linguistic innovation, the exclusion of the futurists would not have seemed so surprising. However, given Eugene Jolas' commitment to the renovation of language, and his comprehensive coverage of the dada movement, the omission of Russian futurism can only be seen as a major failure to provide an acquaintance with one of the truly innovative movements of the early twentieth century, indeed, with a movement to which Jolas' own experimentation was probably more closely linked than he ever could have known.

By and large, the works selected for inclusion in transition were neither experimental nor exceptional. transition's editors, either through ignorance, poor judgement or bias, neglected the most avant-garde writers Russia produced during the first quarter of the twentieth century. transition omitted not only the futurists, but

other gifted and innovational writers such as Marina Cvetaeva, Osip Mandel'stam and Boris Pasternak.

The writers who were selected and who did exhibit linguistic experimentation did not receive suitable translations, and thus, much of what made them experimental -- a function of language -- was quite literally lost in translation. transition was in no position to cope with the challenges inherent in translating the more experimentalist Russian works.

## FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 1:

[1]Dougald McMillan, transition: The History of a Literary Era, 1927-1938 (London: Calder and Boyars, 1975). I am indebted to McMillan for much of the background material.

[2]Eugene Jolas and Elliot Paul, "Introduction," transition, No. 1 (1927), p. 137.

[3]transition, No. 12 (1928), p. 182.

[4]transition, No. 16-17 (1929), p. 13.

[5]Eugene Jolas, "Logos," transition, No. 16-17 (1929), pp. 29-30.

[6]Theo Rutra, "Faula and Flona," transition, No. 16-17 (1929), p. 34.

[7]McMillan, p. 60.

[8]transition, No. 22 (1933), p. 177.

[9]McMillan, p. 70.

[10]Eugene Jolas, "Frontierless Decade," transition, No. 27 (1938), p. 8.

[11]McMillan, p. 71.

[12]Frederick J. Hoffman, Charles Allen, and Carolyn F. Ulrich, The Little Magazine: A History and Bibliography (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1946), p. 2.

[13]Bernard J. Poli, Ford Madox Ford and the Transatlantic Review (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1967), p. 1.

[14]Frederick J. Hoffman, The Twenties: American Writing in the Postwar Decade (New York: Viking Press, 1955), p. 27.

[15]Ernest Earnest, Expatriates and Patriots: American Artists, Scholars, and Writers in Europe (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1968), p. 256.

[16]Hart Crane, The Letters of Hart Crane, 1916-1932, ed. Brom Weber (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1952), p. 290.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Hugh Ford, Published in Paris: American and British Writers, Printers, and Publishers in Paris, 1920-1939 (New York: Macmillan, 1975), p. 5.

[19]Earnest, p. 256.

[20]Poli, p. 2.

[21]See Robert McAlmon, Being Geniuses Together, 1920-1930, rev. with suppl. chapters by Kay Boyle (New York: Doubleday, 1968), pp. 200-01.

[22]Samuel Putnam, Paris Was our Mistress: Memoirs of a Lost and Found Generation (New York: Viking Press, 1947), p. 219.

[23]Malcolm Cowley, Exile's Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s (New York: Viking Press, 1951), p. 275.

[24]Eugene Jolas and Elliot Paul, "Introduction," transition, No. 1 (1927), p. 137.

[25]While some critics would see Joyce's Work in Progress as excessive, here we are referring to writers such as Abraham Lincoln Gillespie.

[26]Ford, p. 135.

[27]Ibid., p. 81.

[28]McMillan, p. 34. See also Lewis' The Diabolical Principle and the Dithyrambic Spectator (London: Chatto and Windus, 1931), a diatribe directed mainly at Jolas, Paul and transition.

[29]William Troy, "The Story of the Little Magazines," The Bookman, 70 (1930), 662.

[30]Eugene Jolas and Elliot Paul, "Introduction," transition, No. 1 (1927), p. 136

[31]transition, No. 10 (1928), unpaged advertisement.

[32]For example, works and articles were included by and about cultural figures such as the artist Pavel Tselitsieff (who had already emigrated from Russia at this time) and the film director Sergei Eizenshtein.

[33]Eugene Jolas and Elliot Paul, "A Review," transition, No. 12 (1928), p. 142.

[34]transition, No. 14 (1928), p. 275.

[35]Cowley, p. 218.

[36] transition, No. 2 (1927), pp. 164-68.

[37] McMillan, p. 31.

[38] Alexander Eliasberg, "Russian Letter, December, 1923," in A Dial Miscellany, ed. William Wasserstrom (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 184-85. Originally published in The Dial, 1924.

[39] McMillan, p. 21.

[40] Jolas later made clear his concern about the rise of collectivism and its implications for the evolution of individualism by eliciting "professions of faith" from several European and American writers and scientists which he published in the March 1932 issue.

CHAPTER 2:

[1] McMillan, p. 9.

[2] Jolas wrote an autobiography, as yet unpublished, entitled "Man from Babel," which is in the possession of his wife in Paris. Hoffman (The Little Magazine) mentions an autobiography,"Frontier Man," which might be the same document.

[3] McMillan, p. 10.

[4] Ibid., p. 18.

[5] Eugene Jolas, "Pan-Romanticism in the Atomic Age," in Transition Workshop, ed. Eugene Jolas (New York: Vanguard Press, 1949), p. 394.

[6] Hoffman, The Little Magazine, p. 177.

[7] Jolas, "Pan-Romanticism," p. 393.

[8] Ibid.

[9] McMillan, p. 92.

[10] According to McMillan, this was the first time that any of Kafka's works had appeared in English.

[11] McMillan, p. 16.

[12] Ibid., p. 102.

[13] Letter to the writer from Mrs. Eugene Jolas, dated May 17, 1978.

[14] McAlmon, p. 186.

[15]George Steiner, After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975), p. 192.

[16]Hugo Ball, "Sound Poems (Zurich, 1915)," trans. Eugene Jolas from the German Flucht aus der Zeit, transition, No. 25 (1936), pp. 159-60.

[17]André Breton, "Surrealism," in The Modern Tradition: Backgrounds of Modern Literature, ed. Richard Ellmann and Charles Feidelson, Jr. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), p. 602.

[18]McMillan, p. 80. See also Stuart Gilbert, "Five Years of transition," transition, No. 22 (1933), p. 139.

[19]Eugene Jolas, "Transition: An Occidental Workshop (1927-1938)," in Transition Workshop, ed. Eugene Jolas (New York: Vanguard Press, 1949), p. 15.

[20]Eugene Jolas, Vertigralist Pamphlet (Paris: Transition Press, 1938), p. 6.

[21]Hoffman, The Little Magazine, p. 178.

CHAPTER 3:

[1]Gleb Struve refers to twelve, but mentions that sometimes Vladimir Pozner and Viktor Šklovskij were not included. See Struve, Russian Literature Under Lenin and Stalin, 1917-1953 (Norman, Okla.: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1971), p. 51.

[2]See note in A.S. Puškin, Polnoe sobranie sočinenij (Moskva: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk, 1949), IV, 532.

[3]transition, No. 4 (1927), p. 116. Here Puškin shares similarities with older satirical works (on the same topic, as well as on Jeanne d'arc).

[4]Ibid., p. 130.

[5]Puškin, "Gavriliada," in his Polnoe sobranie sočinenij v desjati tomax (Moskva: Izd-vo Akademii Nauk, 1949), IV, 144.

[6]Ibid., p. 154.

[7]Ibid., p. 138.

[8]Ibid., p. 140.

[9]Ibid., p. 138.

[10]Ibid., p. 152.

[11]Ibid., p. 141.

[12]First printed in Teatr in 1918 under the title Neznakomka, the work had three epigraphs: one was a quatrain from the poem by the same title and the other two were from Dostoevsky's The Idiot. In the definitive edition only the latter two remain, but all three are included in the transition version. On this point see F.D. Reeve, Aleksandr Blok: Between Image and Idea, Columbia Studies in the Humanities, 1 (New York: Columbia Press, 1962), p. 96.

[13]The mixing of poetry and prose was not, however, really new. On this see V. Markov, Russian Futurism: A History (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1969), p. 390, fn. 3. For example, this mixing exists in Shakespeare.

[14]transition, No. 2 (1927), p. 61.

[15]E.g. he experiments with imperfect rhyme, coupling words like meč and sčest'; lik and sneg; and moroznoj and železnoj.

[16]Aleksandr Blok, Neznakomka, in his Sobranie sočinenij v šesti tomax (Moskva: Biblioteka "Ogonek," 1971), IV, 86.

[17]Ibid., p. 70.

[18]Ibid., p. 79.

[19]Ibid., p. 80.

[20]Ibid., p. 79.

[21]Sergej Esenin, "Ustal ja žit' v rodnom kraju," in his S. Esenin (Moskva: Izd-vo Sovetskaja Rossija, 1965), p. 123.

[22]She probably took "na menja" to mean "my," that is, she related it to drug, and did not see it as part of an enjambement.

[23]Published in transition, No. 6 (1927), pp. 125-28.

[24]Sergej Esenin, Moskva Kabačkaja, in his S. Esenin (Moskva: Izd-vo Sovetskaja Rossija, 1965), p. 192.

[25]More than a million copies of his works were sold from 1922 to 1927. On this point see James H. Billington, The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture (New York: Knopf, 1966), p. 520.

[26]Marc Slonim, Modern Russian Literature: From Chekhov to the Present (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1953), p. 304.

[27]Mixail Zoščenko, "Foma Nevernyj," in his Rasskazy (kniga pervaja), 2-e izd. (Leningrad: Gos. Izd-vo Xud. lit-ry, 1931), pp. 141-42.

[28]Ibid., p. 141.

[29]First in Ural'skij rabočij, Sept. 7, 1926, No. 203 as "Prostaja žizn'" and in 30 dnej , 1926, No. 9 as "Evsej." It first appeared as "Starik" in Dyxanie pustyni: Rasskazy (Leningrad: Priboj, 1927). See Vsevolod Ivanov, Sobranie sočinenij v vos'mi tomax (Moskva: Xudožestvennaja lit-ra, 1974), II, 624.

[30]Patricia Carden gives an English analogy which can be helpful in understanding Russian ornamentalism. She cites a passage from Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man which has a particularly rhythmical, repetitive, musical effect and asks the reader to imagine it written in the punning, invented language of Finnegan's Wake. See Patricia Carden, "Ornamentalism and Modernism," in Russian Modernism: Culture and the Avant-Garde, 1900-1930, ed. George Gibian and H.W. Tjalsma (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1976), p. 52.

[31]Cited from Gleb Struve, p. 65.

[32]Ivanov, p. 444.

[33]Literally, "blow," it might have been translated: "Make tracks!"

[34]Ivanov, p. 444.

[35]Ibid., p. 447.

[36]Vladimir Lidin, Šestaja dver' (Berlin: Knigoizdatel'stvo Pisatelej, 1923). The excerpt is Part 1 of the short story by the same title.

[37]Elliot Paul, "Simultaneity in Modern Russia," transition, No. 5 (1927), p. 160.

[38]Lidin, p. 42.

[39]Later on in the work she translates zanesti accurately, so this error seems somewhat inexplicable.

[40]Lidin, p. 42.

[41]The name itself is not a very accurate translation, since the Russian would be "Nicholas, to Whom God Appeared."

[42]Lidin, p. 40.

[43]Ibid., p. 39.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Ibid., p. 45.

[46]Ibid., pp. 45-46.

[47]One would think that this is a misprint--the word should be mglu --except that it occurs twice in the Russian. Possibly this is an example of a neologism.

[48]Lidin, p. 41.

[49]Paul, "Simultaneity," p. 161.

[50]Boris Pil'njak, Sobranie sočinenij, V (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe Izd-vo, 1929), 145.

[51]Ibid.

[52]Ibid., p. 148.

[53]Ibid., p. 149.

[54]Pantelejmon Romanov, "Černye lepeški: Rasskazy," izd. 3e, in his Polnoe sobranie sočinenij, V (Moskva: Izd-vo Tovariščestvo "Nedra," 1928), 7.

[55]Ibid.

[56]Ibid., p. 8.

[57]Ibid., p. 6.

[58]Ibid., p. 7.

[59]Ibid., p. 8.

[60]Ibid., p. 13.

[61]Ibid., p. 7.

[62]On this point see B. Hiller, "Konstantin Fedin und der deutsche Expressionismus," Zeitschrift für Slawistik, 10 (1965), 35-52.

[63]On the other hand, one of her errors involves adding zest: she mistakes the Russian ogolennye for ognennye and thus the peasant women have "fiery" calves instead of "naked" ones.

[64]Konstantin Fedin, "Sad," in Sobranie sočinenij v desjati tomax, II (Moskva: Izd-vo Xudožestvennaja literatura, 1970), 331.

[65]Ibid., p. 332.

[66]Ibid., p. 326.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Konstantin Fedin, "The Garden," in transition, No. 9 (1927), p. 80.

[69]Fedin, "Sad," p. 326.

[70]Fedin, "The Garden," p. 80.

[71]Lidija Sejfullina, "Zolotoe detstvo," in Molodnjak: Rasskazy, 2e izd. (Moskva: Novaja Moskva, 1925), p. 75.

[72]Ibid., p. 76.

[73]Ibid., p. 75.

[74]Ibid., p. 76.

[75]First published in the collection Dve duši (Two Souls), it had the title "Zigzagi duši" ("Zigzag of the Soul") in manuscript form. It was later given the present title, "Za gorodom."

[76]Aleksej Novikov-Priboj, "Za gorodom," in his Sobranie sočinenij v pjati tomax (Moskva: Biblioteka "Ogonek," Izd-vo Pravda, 1963), I, 278.

[77]Ibid., p. 280.

[78]Ibid., p. 281.

[79]Ibid., p. 280.

[80]Ibid., p. 278.

[81]Ibid., p. 280.

CHAPTER 4:

[1]Boris Pil'njak, "The Tale of the Unextinguished Moon" and Other Stories, trans. Beatrice Scott (New York: Washington Square Press, 1967). Cited from the introd. by Robert Payne, p. xi.

[2]Letter to the writer, April 11, 1978.

[3]Letter to the writer, May 17, 1978.

[4]McMillan, pp. 18-19.

[5]Putnam, p. 222.

[6]Ibid.

[7]For example, Renato Poggioli sees Xlebnikov as reminiscent of Joyce and his creation, especially of Finnegans Wake. See Poggioli's "Russian Futurism, Xlebnikov, Esenin," Slavic and East European Journal, NS 2 (1958), 15.

[8]D.S. Mirsky, Contemporary Russian Literature, 1881-1925, Contemporary Literature Series (1926; rpt. New York: Kraus, 1972), p. 266.

[9]Steiner, p. 192.

[10]Stephen Scobie, "I Dreamed I Saw Hugo Ball: bpNichol, Dada, and Sound Poetry," Boundary 2, No. 1 (1974), p. 220.

[11]Eugene Jolas, "Surrealism: Ave atque Vale," Fantasy, 7, No. 1 (1941), 24.

[12]Scobie, p. 221.

[13]Ilija Zdanevič, Iliazd [catalogue d'exhibition 10 mai-25 juin 1978] (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1978).

[14]According to Markov, the Briks' apartment became the leading futurist salon in Petrograd in 1915. See Markov, p. 292.

[15]Putnam, p. 185.

[16]See J.C. Marcadé, "Chronologie du futurisme russe," Europe, No. 552 (1975), p. 220, and V. Katanjan, Majakovskij: literaturnaja xronika, 2e dopol. izd. (Moskva: Sovetskij Pisatel', 1948).

[17]On the question of nihilism and avant-garde movements, see Renato Poggioli, The Theory of the Avant-Garde, trans. Gerald Fitzgerald (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1968), pp. 61-65.

[18]For a discussion of the similarities between dada and futurism in the areas of aesthetic transgressions and indecorum see Vladimir Markov, The Longer Poems of Velimir Khlebnikov, University of California Publications in Modern Philology, 62 (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1962), p. 6 and Camilla Gray's The Russian Experiment in Art, 1863-1922 (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), pp. 186-87.

[19]Hans Richter, Dada: Art and Anti-Art (New York: Abrams, 1965), pp. 198-99.

[20]G. Ribemont-Dessaignes, "Iz predislovija k drame Zdanevića: LidantJU fAram," in Manifesty i programmy russkix futuristov, hrsg. Vladimir Markov, Slavische Propyläen, 27 (München: Fink, 1967), p. 182.

[21]Raoul Hausmann, "Note sur le poème phonétique: Kandinsky et Ball," German Life & Letters, NS 21 (1967), 59.

[22]J.C. Middleton, "Editorial Note" to Raoul Hausmann's "Introduction à une histoire du poème phonétique (1910-1939)," German Life & Letters, 19 (1965-66), 23.

[23]Vladimir Markov, "The Province of Russian Futurism," Slavic and East European Journal, NS 8 (1964), 401.

[24]Poggioli, "Russian Futurism," p. 8.

[25]transition, No. 16-17 (1929), p. 13.

[26]"Declaration of the Word as Such," ("Slovo kak takovoe") signed by A. Kručenyx and V. Xlebnikov, cited from Markov, Russian Futurism, p. 131.

[27]transition, No. 16-17 (1929), p. 13.

[28]Cited from Markov, Russian Futurism, pp. 130-31.

[29]transition, No. 16-17 (1929), p. 13.

[30]Georges Hugnet, "The Dada Spirit in Painting," in The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology, ed. Robert Motherwell (New York: Wittenborn, 1951), pp. 192-93.

[31]Eugene Jolas, "From Jabberwocky to 'Lettrism'," Transition Forty-Eight, No. 1 (1948), p. 104. Although Jolas was on the editorial board of this journal, it was not a continuation of the original transition. See McMillan, p. 74.

[32]Cited from Alexander Kaun, Soviet Poets and Poetry, Essay Reprint Series (1943; rpt., Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1968), p. 23.

[33]Cited from Vladimir Markov and Merrill Sparks, Modern Russian Poetry (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), p. 326.

[34]Tristan Tzara, "Toto Vaca," transition, No. 19-20 (1930), p. 184.

[35]A.L. Gillespie, Jr., "Monograph for Harold Weston's 'Evo-Love Series'," transition, No. 19-20 (1930), pp. 201-202.

[36]Hugo Ball, "Clouds," transition, No. 21 (1932), p. 304.

[37]McMillan, p. 22.

CHAPTER 5:

[1]Eugene Jolas, "Transition: An Epilogue," The American Mercury, 23 (1931), p. 190.

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## APPENDIX

### Russian Literature Appearing in transition

No. 2 (May 1927)

S. Essenin. "I'm Tired of Living in My Native Land." Tr. Gusta Zimbalist & Eugene Jolas. (143-44)

A. Blok. The Unknown Woman (pt. 1) Tr. Olive Frances Murphy. (52-63)

No. 3 (June 1927)

M. Zoschenko. "Foma the Faithless." Tr. Sofia Himmel. (86-90)

A. Blok. The Unknown Woman (pt. 2) Tr. O.F. Murphy. (96-109)

No. 4 (July 1927)

Vs. Ivanov. "The Old Timer." Tr. S. Himmel. (66-73)

A. Blok. The Unknown Woman (pt. 3) Tr. O.F. Murphy. (90-100)

A. Pushkin. "Gabriliad." Tr. Max Eastman. (116-31)

No. 5 (August 1927)

V. Lidin. "The Sixth Door." Tr. & adapted by S. Himmel. (84-92)

No. 6 (September 1927)

B. Pilniak. "That Which is Dead Calls Always." Tr. & adapted by S. Himmel (9-15)

S. Essenin. "Moscow Dive." Tr. Gusta Zimbalist-Jaryczower. (125-28)

No. 8 (November 1927)

P. Romanov. "Black Cakes." Tr. & adapted S. Himmel. (77-88)

No. 9 (December 1927)

K. Fedin. "The Garden." Tr. & adapted S. Himmel (76-87)

No. 10 (January 1928)

L. Seifoulina. "The Golden Childhood." Tr. & adapted S. Himmel (43-46)

No. 14 (Fall 1928)

A. Novikov-Priboi. "Beyond the City." Tr. S. Himmel (261-66)